

THE ENGLISH MAJOR'S LITERARY PERIODS CHEAT SHEET

A Note from the Author/Collator/Editor/Fellow Cheater:

Thinking about literature in terms of periods is a great way to categorize authors, genres, and styles of writing. But remember that some of these ideas and categories are fluid, and open to interpretation among literary scholars. So what is the Restoration Period to one author may be subsumed into the Long 18th Century for another author. What's Postmodern for one critic may be Modernist for another. What's included here will get you in the door when it comes time to talk about periodization, but something this cursory will leave a lot of the nuances by the wayside.

Each period here has a short introduction. The tables that follow give you the dates for significant literary events ("Texts") as well as for important cultural happenings ("Contexts"). While I have stolen/borrowed/co-opted much of this material, I attempt to acknowledge the various sources at the conclusion of the document.

Before We Really Get Started with *English Lit* . . .

We'll begin with a periodization of the ages of classical literature in the West. These are foundational in English and (to a lesser extent) American literature.

THE CLASSICAL PERIOD (1200 BCE-455 CE)

Homeric or Heroic Period (1200 BCE-800 BCE)

Greek legends are passed along orally, including Homer's *The Iliad* and *The Odyssey*. This is a chaotic period of warrior-princes, wandering sea-traders, and fierce pirates.

Classical Greek Period (800 BCE-200 BCE)

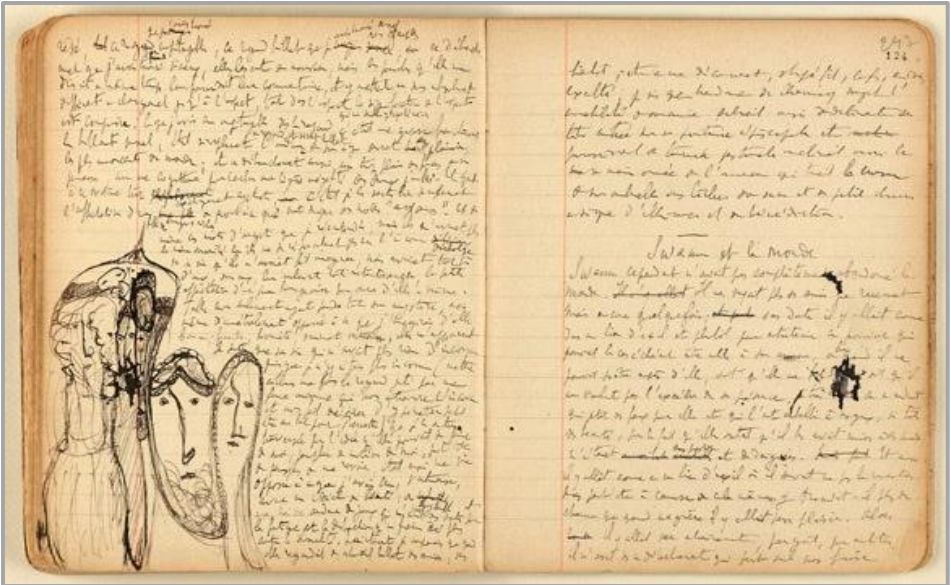
Greek writers, playwrights, and philosophers such as Gorgias, Aesop, Plato, Socrates, Aristotle, Euripides, and Sophocles. The fifth century (499-400 BCE) in particular is renowned as The Golden Age of Greece. This is the sophisticated period of the polis, or individual City-State, and early democracy. Some of the world's finest art, poetry, drama, architecture, and philosophy originate in Athens.

Classical Roman Period (200 BCE-455 CE)

Greece's culture gives way to Roman power when Rome conquers Greece in 146 CE. The Roman Republic was traditionally founded in 509 BCE, but it is limited in size until later. Playwrights of this time include Plautus and Terence. After nearly 500 years as a Republic, Rome slides into dictatorship under Julius Caesar and finally into a monarchical empire under Caesar Augustus in 27 CE. This later period is known as the Roman Imperial period. Roman writers include Ovid, Horace, and Virgil. Roman philosophers include Marcus Aurelius and Lucretius. Roman rhetoricians include Cicero and Quintilian.

Patristic Period (ca. 70 CE-455 CE)

Early Christian writings appear from writers such as Augustine, Tertullian, Cyprian, Ambrose and Jerome. This is the period in which Jerome first compiles the Bible, when Christianity spreads across Europe, and the Roman Empire suffers its dying convulsions. In this period, barbarians attack Rome in 410 CE and the city finally falls to them completely in 455 CE.



Periods of English Literature

428-1066	Old English (Anglo-Saxon) Period 800-850 The Carolingian Renaissance
1066-1485	Middle English Period 1100-1350 Anglo-Norman Period 1200-1485 High Middle Ages
1485-1660	The Renaissance (Early Modern) 1485-1558 Early Tudor Period 1558-1603 Elizabethan Age 1603-1625 Jacobean Age 1625-1649 Caroline Age 1649-1660 Commonwealth Period (Puritan Interregnum)
1660-1785	The Enlightenment (Neoclassical Period) 1660-1700 The Restoration 1700-1745 The Augustan Age 1745-1785 The Age of Sensibility (Age of Johnson)
1785-1832	The Romantic Period
1832-1901	The Victorian Period 1848-1860 The Pre-Raphaelites 1880-1901 Aestheticism and Decadence
1901-1914	The Edwardian Period
1910-1936	The Georgian Period
1914-1939	The Modern Period
1939-	The Postmodern Period

Periods of American Literature

1607-1775	The Colonial Period 1765-1790 The Revolutionary Period
1775-1865	The Early National Period 1828-1865 The Romantic Period (American Renaissance)
1865-1914	Realism 1900-1914 The Naturalistic Period
1914-1939	Modernism 1917-1929 The Harlem Renaissance 1920-1929 The Jazz Age The Lost Generation 1930-1939 The Radical '30s
1939-	The Contemporary Period

THE OLD ENGLISH (ANGLO-SAXON) PERIOD (428-1066)

In 428 Rome falls and barbarian tribes move into Europe. Franks, Ostrogoths, Lombards, and Goths settle in the ruins of Europe and the Angles, Saxons, and Jutes migrate to Britain, displacing native Celts into Scotland, Ireland, and Wales. **The Carolingian Renaissance** (800-850) eventually emerges in Europe. In central Europe, texts include early medieval grammars, encyclopedias, etc. In northern Europe, this time period marks the setting of Viking sagas.

This period ends with the conquest of England in 1066 by the Norman French under the leadership of William the Conqueror. Only after they had been converted to Christianity in the 7th century did the Anglo-Saxons, whose earlier literature had been oral, begin to develop a written literature.

A high level of culture and learning was soon achieved in various monasteries; the 8th-century churchmen Bede and Alcuin were major scholars who wrote in Latin, the standard language of international scholarship. The poetry written in the vernacular Anglo-Saxon, known also as Old English, included *Beowulf* (8th century), the greatest of Germanic epic poems, and such lyric laments as “The Wanderer,” “The Seafarer,” and “Deor,” all of which—with either pre-existing pagan texts grafted on to by later Christian writers or outright composed by them—reflect the conditions of life in the pagan past. Caedmon and Cynewulf were poets who wrote on biblical and religious themes, and there survive a number of Old English lives of saints, sermons, and paraphrases of books of the Bible. Alfred the Great, a West Saxon king (871-99) who for a time united all the kingdoms of southern England against a new wave of Germanic invaders, the Vikings, was no less important as a patron of literature than as a warrior. He himself translated into Old English various books of Latin prose, supervised translations by other hands, and instituted the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, a continuous record, year by year, of important events in England.

TEXTS	CONTEXTS
<p>ca. 405 St. Jerome completes <i>Vulgate</i>, Latin translation of the Bible that becomes standard for the Roman Catholic Church</p> <p>523 Boethius, <i>Consolation of Philosophy</i> (Latin)</p> <p>ca. 658-80 <i>Cædmon's Hymn</i>, earliest poem recorded in English</p> <p>731 Bede completes <i>Ecclesiastical History of the English People</i></p> <p>? ca. 750 <i>Beowulf</i> composed</p> <p>871-99 Texts written or commissioned by Alfred</p> <p>ca. 1000 Unique manuscript of <i>Beowulf</i> and <i>Judith</i></p>	<p>43-ca. 420 Romans conquer Britons; Britannia a province of the Roman Empire</p> <p>307-37 Reign of Constantine the Great leads to adoption of Christianity as official religion of the Roman Empire</p> <p>432 St. Patrick begins mission to convert Ireland</p> <p>ca. 450 Anglo-Saxon conquest of Britons begins</p> <p>597 St. Augustine of Canterbury's mission to Kent begins conversion of Anglo-Saxons to Christianity</p> <p>ca. 787 First Viking raids on England</p> <p>871-99 Reign of King Alfred</p> <p>1066 Norman Conquest by William I establishes French-speaking ruling class in England</p>

THE MIDDLE ENGLISH PERIOD (ca. 1066-1450)

In 1066, Norman French armies invade and conquer England under William I. This marks the end of the Anglo-Saxon hierarchy and the emergence of the 12th-Century Renaissance (ca. 1100-1200). French chivalric romances—such as works by Chrétien de Troyes—and French fables—such as the works of Marie de France and Jean de Meun—spread in popularity. Abelard and other humanists produce great scholastic and theological works.

These four and a half centuries fall between the Norman Conquest in 1066—which effected radical changes in the language, life, and culture of England—and about 1500, when the standard literary language (deriving from the dialect of the London area) had become recognizably “modern English”—that is, close enough to the language we speak and write to be intelligible to a present-day reader.

Anglo-Norman Period (ca. 1100-ca. 1350)

The span from 1100 to 1350 is sometimes called the Anglo-Norman Period, because the non-Latin literature of that time was written mainly in Anglo-Norman, the French dialect spoken by the invaders, who had established themselves as the ruling class of England, and who shared a literary culture with French-speaking areas of mainland Europe. Among the important and influential works from this period are Marie de France’s *Lais* (ca.1180—which may have been written while Marie was at the royal court in England), Guillaume de Lorris’ and Jean de Meun’s *Roman de la Rose* (1225?-75?), and Chrétien de Troyes’ *Erec et Enide* (the first Arthurian romance, ca.1165) and *Yvain* (ca.1177-81). When the native vernacular—descended from Anglo-Saxon, but with extensive lexical and syntactic elements assimilated from Anglo-Norman, and known as Middle English—came into general literary use, it was at first mainly the vehicle for religious and homiletic writings.

Late or “High” Medieval Period (ca. 1200-1485)

This often tumultuous period is marked by the Middle English writings of Geoffrey Chaucer, the “Gawain” or “Pearl” Poet, the Wakefield Master, and William Langland. Other writers include Italian and French authors like Boccaccio, Petrarch, Dante, and Christine de Pisan.

The first great age of primarily secular literature—rooted in the Anglo-Norman, French, Irish, and Welsh, as well as the native English literature—was the second half of the 14th century. This was the age of Chaucer and John Gower, of William Langland’s great religious and satirical poem *Piers Plowman*, and of the anonymous master who wrote four major poems in complex alliterative meter, including *Pearl* (an elegy) and *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*. This last work is the most accomplished of the English chivalric romances in verse; the most notable prose romance was Thomas Malory’s *Morte d’Arthur*, written a century later.

The outstanding poets of the 15th century were the “Scottish Chaucerians,” who included King James I of Scotland and Robert Henryson. The 15th century was more important for popular literature than for the artful literature addressed to the upper classes: it was the age of many excellent songs, secular and religious, and of diverse folk ballads, as well as the flowering time of the miracle and morality plays, which were written and produced for the general public.

TEXTS	CONTEXTS
<p>ca. 1135-38 Geoffrey of Monmouth's Latin <i>History of the Kings of Britain</i> gives pseudohistorical status to Arthurian and other legends.</p> <p>1154 End of <i>Peterborough Chronicle</i>, last branch of the <i>Anglo-Saxon Chronicle</i></p> <p>? ca. 1165-80 Marie de France, <i>Lais</i> in Anglo-Norman French from Breton sources.</p> <p>ca. 1170-91 Chrétien de Troyes, chivalric romances about knights of the Round Table</p> <p>? ca. 1200 Layamon's <i>Brut</i></p> <p>? ca. 1215-25 <i>Ancrene Wisse</i></p> <p>ca. 1304-21 Dante Alighieri writing <i>The Divine Comedy</i></p> <p>ca. 1340-1374 Giovanni Boccaccio active as writer in Naples and Florence</p> <p>ca. 1340-1374 Francis Petrarch active as writer</p> <p>1368 Chaucer, <i>Book of the Duchess</i></p> <p>1373-93 Julian of Norwich, <i>Book of Showings</i></p> <p>ca. 1375-1400 <i>Sir Gawain and the Green Knight</i></p> <p>1377-79 William Langland, <i>Piers Plowman</i> (B-Text)</p> <p>ca. 1380 Followers of John Wycliffe begin first complete translation of the Bible into English</p> <p>ca. 1385-87 Chaucer, <i>Troilus and Criseyde</i></p> <p>ca. 1387-99 Chaucer working on <i>The Canterbury Tales</i></p> <p>ca. 1390-92 John Gower, <i>Confessio Amantis</i></p> <p>ca. 1410-49 John Lydgate active</p> <p>ca. 1420 Thomas Hoccleve, <i>My Compleinte</i></p> <p>ca. 1425 <i>York Play of the Crucifixion</i></p> <p>ca. 1432-38 Margery Kempe, <i>The Book of Margery Kempe</i></p> <p>ca. 1450-75 Wakefield mystery cycle, <i>Second Shepherds' Play</i></p> <p>ca. 1470 Sir Thomas Malory in prison working on <i>Morte Darthur</i></p> <p>ca. 1475 Robert Henryson active</p> <p>1485 Caxton publishes <i>Morte Darthur</i>, one of the first books in English to be printed</p> <p>ca. 1510 <i>Everyman</i></p>	<p>1095-1221 Crusades</p> <p>1152 Future Henry II marries Eleanor of Aquitaine, bringing vast French territories to the English crown</p> <p>1170 Archbishop Thomas Becket murdered in Canterbury Cathedral</p> <p>1182 Birth of St. Francis of Assisi</p> <p>1215 Fourth Lateran Council requires annual confession. English barons force King John to seal <i>Magna Carta</i> (the Great Charter) guaranteeing baronial rights</p> <p>ca. 1337-1453 Hundred Years' War</p> <p>1348 Black Death ravages Europe</p> <p>1362 English first used in law courts and Parliament</p> <p>1372 Chaucer's first journey to Italy</p> <p>1376 Earliest record of performance of cycle drama at York</p> <p>1381 People's uprising briefly takes control of London before being suppressed</p> <p>1399 Richard II deposed by his cousin, who succeeds him as Henry IV</p> <p>1400 Richard II murdered</p> <p>1401 Execution of William Sawtre, first Lollard burned at the stake under new law against heresy</p> <p>1415 Henry V defeats French at Agincourt</p> <p>1431 English burn Joan of Arc at Rouen</p> <p>1455-85 Wars of the Roses</p> <p>1476 William Caxton sets up first printing press in England</p> <p>1485 The earl of Richmond defeats the Yorkist king, Richard III, at Bosworth Field and succeeds him as Henry VII, founder of the Tudor dynasty</p> <p>1575 Last performance of mystery plays at Chester</p>

THE RENAISSANCE (ca. 1485-1660)

The Renaissance takes place in the late 15th, 16th, and early 17th centuries in Britain, but begins ca. 1290 in Italy and southern Europe, and somewhat later in northern Europe.

Early Tudor Period (1485-1558)

The War of the Roses ends in England with Henry Tudor (Henry VII) claiming the throne. Martin Luther's split with Rome marks the emergence of Protestantism, followed by Henry VIII's Anglican schism, which creates the first Protestant church in England. Henry begins the Plantation of Ireland, a confiscation of land in Ireland by the English crown and the colonization of this land with settlers from England and the Scottish Lowlands. This process creates large Irish communities with a British and Protestant identity. Edmund Spenser began his career during this time.

Elizabethan Period (1558-1603)

Strictly speaking, this is the period of the reign of Elizabeth I (1558-1603). However, the term "Elizabethan" is often used loosely to refer to the late 16th and early 17th centuries, even after the death of Elizabeth. This was a time of rapid development in English commerce, maritime power, and nationalist feeling—the defeat of the Spanish Armada occurred in 1588. It was a great (in drama the greatest) age of English literature—the age of Sir Philip Sidney, Christopher Marlowe, Edmund Spenser, William Shakespeare, Christopher Marlowe, Sir Walter Raleigh, Francis Bacon, Ben Jonson, and many other extraordinary writers of prose and of dramatic, lyric, and narrative poetry. A number of scholars have looked back on this era as one of intellectual coherence and social order. Recent historical critics, however, have emphasized its intellectual uncertainties and political and social conflicts. While Elizabeth saves England from both Spanish invasion and internal squabbles at home, she intensifies the Plantation of Ireland.

Jacobean Period (1603-1625)

This period delineates the reign of James I (Latin, "Jacobus"), which followed that of Queen Elizabeth. This was the period in prose writings of Bacon, John Donne's sermons, Robert Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy*, and the King James translation of the Bible. It was also the time of Shakespeare's greatest tragedies and tragicomedies, and of major writings by other notables, including Donne, Ben Jonson, Michael Drayton, Lady Mary Wroth, Sir Francis Beaumont and John Fletcher, John Webster, George Chapman, Thomas Middleton, Philip Massinger, and Elizabeth Cary.

Caroline Age (1625-1649)

The name of this period comes from the Latin version ("Carolus") of the name of Charles I. This was the time of the English Civil War, fought between the supporters of the king ("Cavaliers") and the supporters of Parliament ("Roundheads," they wore their hair cut short). John Milton began his writing during this period; it was the time also of the religious poet George Herbert and of the prose writers Robert Burton and Sir Thomas Browne.

Associated with the court were the Cavalier poets, writers of witty and polished lyrics of courtship and gallantry. The group included Richard Lovelace, Sir John Suckling, and Thomas Carew. Robert Herrick, although a country parson, is often classified with the Cavalier poets because, like them, he was a "Son of Ben"—that is, an admirer and follower of Ben Jonson—in many of his lyrics of love and gallant compliment.

Commonwealth Period / Puritan Interregnum (1649-1660)

This period extends from the end of the Civil War and the execution of Charles I to the restoration of the Stuart monarchy under Charles II. England was ruled by Parliament under the Puritan leader Oliver Cromwell; his death in 1658 marked the dissolution of the Commonwealth. Drama almost disappeared for 18 years; the Puritans closed the public theaters in September 1642, not only on moral and religious grounds, but also to prevent public assemblies that might foment civil disorder. It was the age of Milton's political pamphlets, of Hobbes' political treatise *Leviathan* (1651), of the prose writers Sir Thomas Browne, Thomas Fuller, Jeremy Taylor, and Izaak Walton, and of the poets Henry Vaughan, Edmund Waller, Abraham Cowley, Sir William Davenant, and Andrew Marvell.

TEXTS	CONTEXTS
<p>ca. 1505-07 Amerigo Vespucci, <i>New World</i> and <i>Four Voyages</i></p> <p>1511 Desiderius Erasmus, <i>Praise of Folly</i></p> <p>1516 Thomas More, <i>Utopia</i>. Ludovico Ariosto, <i>Orlando Furioso</i></p> <p>ca. 1517 John Skelton, "The Tunning of Elinour Rumming"</p> <p>1520s-30s Thomas Wyatt's poems circulating in manuscript</p> <p>1525 William Tyndale's English translation of the New Testament</p> <p>1528 Baldassare Castiglione, <i>The Courtier</i></p> <p>1532 Niccolò Machiavelli, <i>The Prince</i> (written 1513)</p> <p>1537 John Calvin, <i>The Institution of Christian Religion</i></p> <p>1543 Copernicus, <i>On the Revolution of the Spheres</i></p> <p>1547 <i>Book of Homilies</i></p> <p>1549 <i>Book of Common Prayer</i></p> <p>1557 Tottel's <i>Songs and Sonnets</i> (printing poems by Wyatt, Surrey, and others)</p> <p>1563 John Foxe, <i>Acts and Monuments</i></p> <p>1565 Thomas Norton and Thomas Sackville, <i>Gorboduc</i>, first English blank-verse tragedy (acted in 1561)</p> <p>1567 Arthur Golding, translation of Ovid's <i>Metamorphoses</i></p>	<p>1485 Accession of Henry VII inaugurates Tudor dynasty</p> <p>ca. 1504 Leonardo da Vinci paints the Mona Lisa</p> <p>1508-12 Michaelangelo paints Sistine Chapel ceiling</p> <p>1509 Death of Henry VII; accession of Henry VIII</p> <p>1513 James IV of Scotland killed at Battle of Flodden; succeeded by James V</p> <p>1517 Martin Luther's Ninety-Five Theses; beginning of the Reformation in Germany</p> <p>1519 Cortés invades Mexico. Magellen begins his voyage around the world</p> <p>1521 Pope Leo X names Henry VIII "Defender of the Faith"</p> <p>1529-32 More is Lord Chancellor</p> <p>1532-34 Henry VIII divorces Catherine of Aragon to marry Anne Boleyn; Elizabeth I born; Henry declares himself head of the Church of England</p> <p>1535 More beheaded</p> <p>1537 Establishment of Calvin's theocracy at Geneva</p> <p>1542 Roman Inquisition. James V of Scotland dies; succeeded by infant daughter, Mary</p> <p>1547 Death of Henry VIII; accession of Protestant Edward VI</p> <p>1553 Death of Edward VI; failed attempt to put Protestant Lady Jane Grey on throne; accession of Catholic Queen Mary, daughter of Catherine of Aragon</p> <p>1555-56 Archbishop Cranmer and former bishops Latimer and Ridley burned at the stake</p> <p>1558 Mary dies; succeeded by Protestant Elizabeth I</p> <p>1567-68 Mary, Queen of Scots, forced to abdicate; succeeded by her son James VI; Mary imprisoned in England</p> <p>1570 Elizabeth I excommunicated by Pope Pius V</p> <p>1572 St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre of French Protestants</p> <p>1576 James Burbage's play house, The Theater, built in London</p> <p>1577-80 Drake's circumnavigation of the globe</p>

TEXTS	CONTEXTS
<p>1578 John Lyly, <i>Euphues</i> 1579 Edmund Spenser, <i>The Shepherdes Calender</i> 1580 Montaigne, <i>Essais</i></p> <p>ca. 1587-90 Marlowe's <i>Tamburlaine</i> acted. Shakespeare begins career as actor and playwright 1588 Thomas Hariot, <i>A Brief and True Report of . . . Virginia</i> 1589 Richard Hakluyt, <i>The Principal Navigations . . . of the English Nation</i> 1590 Sir Philip Sidney, <i>Arcadia</i> (posthumously published); Spenser, <i>The Faerie Queene</i>, Books 1-3 1591 Sidney, <i>Astrophil and Stella</i> published ca. 1592 John Donne's earliest poems circulating in manuscript 1595 Sidney, <i>The Defense of Poesy</i> published 1596 Spenser, <i>The Faerie Queene</i>, Books 4-6 (with Books 1-3) 1598 Ben Jonson, <i>Every Man in His Humor</i></p>	<p>1583 Irish rebellion crushed 1584-87 Sir Walter Raleigh's earliest attempts to colonize Virginia 1586-87 Mary, Queen of Scots, tried for treason and executed</p> <p>1588 Failed invasion of the Spanish Armada</p> <p>1595 Raleigh's voyage to Guiana</p>
<p>1607 Beaumont and Fletcher, <i>The Knight of the Burning Pestle</i> 1614 John Webster, <i>The Duchess of Malfi</i></p> <p>1624 Donne, <i>Devotions upon Emergent Occasions</i></p> <p>1633 George Herbert, <i>The Temple</i> 1637 John Milton, <i>Lycidas</i></p>	<p>1599 Globe Theater opens 1603 Elizabeth I dies; succeeded by James VI of Scotland (as James I), inaugurating the Stuart dynasty 1605 Gunpowder Plot</p> <p>1620 Arrival of Pilgrims in the New World</p> <p>1625 Death of James I, accession of Charles I</p> <p>1640 The Long Parliament summoned 1642 Civil Wars start; theaters closed</p>
<p>1644 Milton, <i>Areopagita</i> 1646 Richard Crashaw, <i>Steps to the Temple</i> 1648 Robert Herrick, <i>Hesperides</i></p>	<p>1649 Charles I executed; beginning of Commonwealth and Protectorate (the Interregnum) 1658 Death of Cromwell</p>

THE ENLIGHTENMENT (ca. 1660-1790)

Also known as “The Long 18th Century” or “The Neoclassical Period.” “Neoclassical” refers to the increased influence of Classical literature upon these centuries. This period is called the “Enlightenment” due to the increased reverence for logic and disdain for superstition. The period is marked by the rise of Deism, an intellectual backlash against earlier Puritanism, and America’s revolution against England.

The Restoration (ca. 1660-1700)

This period takes its name from the restoration of the Stuart line (Charles II) to the English throne in 1660, at the end of the Commonwealth; it is usually specified as lasting until 1700. The urbanity, wit, and licentiousness of the life centering on the court, in sharp contrast to the seriousness and sobriety of the earlier Puritan regime, is reflected in much of the literature of this age. The theaters came back to vigorous life after the revocation of the ban placed on them by the Puritans in 1642, although they became more exclusively oriented toward the aristocratic classes than they had been earlier. Most writers of the era reflect the dominance of French and Classical influences on poetry and drama. Sir George Etherege, William Wycherley, William Congreve, and John Dryden developed the distinctive comedy of manners called Restoration comedy, and Dryden, Thomas Otway, and other playwrights developed the even more distinctive form of tragedy called heroic drama. Dryden was the major poet and critic, as well as one of the major dramatists. Other poets were the satirists Samuel Butler and the Earl of Rochester; notable writers in prose, in addition to the masterly Dryden, were Samuel Pepys, Sir William Temple, the religious writer in vernacular English John Bunyan, and the philosopher John Locke. Aphra Behn, the first Englishwoman to earn her living by her pen and one of the most inventive and versatile authors of the age, wrote poems, highly successful plays, and *Oroonoko*, the tragic story of a noble African slave, an important precursor of the novel.

The Augustan Age (ca. 1700-1750)

The original Augustan Age was the brilliant literary period of Virgil, Horace, and Ovid under the Roman emperor Augustus (27 BCE-14 CE). In the 18th century and later, however, the term was frequently applied also to the literary period in England from approximately 1700 to 1750. The leading writers of the time (such as Alexander Pope, Jonathan Swift, and Joseph Addison) themselves drew the parallel to the Roman Augustans, and deliberately imitated their literary forms and subjects, their emphasis on social concerns, and their ideals of moderation, decorum, and urbanity. A major representative of popular, rather than classical, writing in this period was the novelist, journalist, and pamphleteer Daniel Defoe. Lady Mary Wortley Montagu was a brilliant letter writer in a great era of letter writing; she also wrote poems of wit and candor that violated the conventional moral and intellectual roles assigned to women in the Augustan era.

The Age of Sensibility (ca. 1750-1790)

The period between the death of Alexander Pope in 1744, and 1785, which was one year after the death of Samuel Johnson and one year before Robert Burns’ *Poems, Chiefly in Scottish Dialect*. (Alternative dates frequently proposed for the end of this period are 1789 and 1798.) An older name for this half-century, the Age of Johnson, stresses the dominant position of Samuel Johnson (1709-84) and his literary and intellectual circle, which included Oliver Goldsmith, Edmund Burke, James Boswell, Edward Gibbon, and

Hester Lynch Thrale. These authors on the whole represented a culmination of the literary and critical modes of neoclassicism and the worldview of the Enlightenment.

The more recent name, “Age of Sensibility,” puts its stress on the emergence, in other writers of the 1740s and later, of new cultural attitudes, theories of literature, and types of poetry; we find in this period, for example, a growing sympathy for the Middle Ages, a vogue of cultural primitivism, an awakening interest in ballads and other folk literature, a turn from neoclassic “correctness” and its emphasis on judgment and restraint to an emphasis on instinct and feeling, the development of a literature of sensibility, and above all the exaltation by some critics of “original genius” and a “bardic” poetry of the sublime and visionary imagination. Thomas Gray expressed this anti-neoclassic sensibility and set of values.

Other poets who showed similar shifts in thought and taste were William Collins and Joseph and Thomas Warton (poets who, together with Gray, began in the 1740s the vogue for what Samuel Johnson slightly referred to as “ode, and elegy, and sonnet”), Christopher Smart, and William Cowper. Thomas Percy published his influential *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry* (1765), which included many folk ballads and a few medieval metrical romances, and James Macpherson in the same decade published his greatly altered (and in considerable part fabricated) versions of the poems of the Gaelic bard Ossian (Oisín) which were enormously popular throughout Europe. This was also the period of the great novelists, some realistic and satiric and some “sentimental”: Samuel Richardson, Henry Fielding, Tobias Smollett, and Laurence Sterne.

TEXTS	CONTEXTS
<p>1660 Samuel Pepys begins his diary</p> <p>1662 Samuel Butler, <i>Hudibras</i>, part 1</p> <p>1667 John Milton, <i>Paradise Lost</i></p> <p>1668 John Dryden, <i>Essay of Dramatic Poesy</i></p> <p>1678 John Bunyan, <i>Pilgrim's Progress</i>, part 1</p> <p>1681 Dryden, <i>Absalom and Achitophel</i></p> <p>1687 Sir Isaac Newton, <i>Principia Mathematica</i></p> <p>1688 Aphra Behn, <i>Oroonoko</i></p> <p>1690 John Locke, <i>An Essay Concerning Human Understanding</i></p> <p>1700 William Congreve, <i>The Way of the World</i>. Mary Astell, <i>Some Reflections upon Marriage</i></p> <p>1704 Jonathan Swift, <i>A Tale of a Tub</i>. Newton, <i>Opticks</i></p>	<p>1660 Charles II restored to the throne. Reopening of the theaters</p> <p>1662 Act of Uniformity requires all clergy to obey the Church of England. Chartering of the Royal Society</p> <p>1664-66 Great Plague of London</p> <p>1666 Fire destroys the City of London</p> <p>1668 Dryden becomes poet laureate</p> <p>1673 Test Act requires all officeholders to swear allegiance to Anglicanism</p> <p>1678 The “Popish Plot” inflames anti-Catholic feeling</p> <p>1681 Charles II dissolves Parliament</p> <p>1685 Death of Charles II. James II, his Catholic brother, takes the throne</p> <p>1688-89 The Glorious Revolution. James II exiled and succeeded by his Protestant daughter, Mary, and her husband, William of Orange</p> <p>1702 War of the Spanish Succession begins. Death of William III. Succession of Anne (Protestant daughter of James II)</p> <p>1707 Act of Union with Scotland</p> <p>1710 Tories take power</p>
<p>1711 Alexander Pope, <i>An Essay on Criticism</i>. Joseph Addison and Sir Richard Steele, <i>Spectator</i> (1711-12, 1714)</p>	

TEXTS	CONTEXTS
<p>1716 Lady Mary Wortley Montagu writes her letters from Turkey (1716-18)</p> <p>1717 Pope, <i>The Rape of the Lock</i> (final version)</p> <p>1719 Daniel Defoe, <i>Robinson Crusoe</i></p>	<p>1713 Treaty of Utrecht ends War of the Spanish Succession</p> <p>1714 Death of Queen Anne. George I (great-grandson of James I) becomes the first Hanoverian king. Tory government replaced by Whigs</p>
<p>1726 Swift, <i>Gulliver's Travels</i></p>	<p>1720 South Sea Bubble collapses</p> <p>1721 Robert Walpole comes to power</p>
<p>1728 John Gay, <i>The Beggar's Opera</i></p> <p>1733 Pope, <i>An Essay on Man</i></p>	<p>1727 George I dies. George II succeeds</p>
<p>1740 Samuel Richardson, <i>Pamela</i></p> <p>1742 Henry Fielding, <i>Joseph Andrews</i></p> <p>1743 Pope, <i>The Dunciad</i> (final version). William Hogarth, <i>Marriage à-la-Mode</i></p> <p>1746 William Collins's <i>Odes</i></p>	<p>1737 Licensing Act censors the stage</p> <p>1742 Walpole resigns</p>
<p>1747 Richardson, <i>Clarissa</i></p> <p>1749 Fielding, <i>Tom Jones</i></p> <p>1751 Thomas Gray, "Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard"</p> <p>1755 Samuel Johnson, <i>Dictionary</i></p>	<p>1746 Charles Edward Stuart's defeat at Culloden ends the last Jacobite rebellion</p> <p>1751 Robert Clive seizes Arcot, the prelude to English control of India</p>
<p>1759 Johnson, <i>Rasselas</i>. Voltaire, <i>Candide</i></p> <p>1760 Laurence Sterne, <i>Tristram Shandy</i> (1760-67)</p> <p>1765 Johnson's edition of Shakespeare</p>	<p>1756 Beginning of Seven Years' War</p> <p>1759 James Wolfe's capture of Quebec ensures British control of Canada</p> <p>1760 George III succeeds to the throne</p>
<p>1770 Oliver Goldsmith, "The Deserted Village"</p>	<p>1768 Captain James Cook voyages to Australia and New Zealand</p>
<p>1776 Adam Smith, <i>The Wealth of Nations</i></p> <p>1778 Frances Burney, <i>Evelina</i></p> <p>1779 Johnson, <i>Lives of the Poets</i> (1779-81)</p>	<p>1775 American Revolution (1775-83). James Watt produces steam engines</p>
<p>1783 George Crabbe, <i>The Village</i></p> <p>1785 William Cowper, <i>The Task</i></p>	<p>1780 Gordon Riots in London</p> <p>1783 William Pitt becomes prime minister</p>

THE ROMANTIC PERIOD (ca. 1790-1830)

The Romantic Period in English literature is dated as beginning in 1785, or alternatively in 1789 (the outbreak of the French Revolution), or in 1798 (the publication of William Wordsworth's and Samuel Taylor Coleridge's *Lyrical Ballads*)—and as ending either in 1830 or else in 1832, the year in which Sir Walter Scott died and the passage of the Reform Bill signaled the political preoccupations of the Victorian era.

Rejecting the “truths” of logic and mathematics, the Romantics praised instead the powers of the “underside” of the human psyche: imagination, emotion (“feeling” and “heart”), and intuition. Romantic art, then, was characterized by high flights of imagination, not the charming & clever “fancy” or “wit” of the preceding age. They also championed an individual's subjective right to discover his/her own “truths” via the mental powers above. The Romantics are responsible for the notion of the artist as a special “breed apart” and the idea that the creative act involves an almost magical, spontaneous, inspired leap of imagination.

This emphasis on emotion and intuition led to a (unfortunately racist and sexist) championing of those people deemed more emotional & intuitive & unconscious & closer to humankind's psychic roots: “primitives”—women, children, and simple country folk. There was also a comparable attraction to exotic settings and medieval settings, illustrating a distance from the European present in both space and time.

The subject matter of the literature of the age changed from urban-centered to nature- or rural-oriented. Many Romantics created a veritable “Religion of Nature,” projecting upon nature *per se* a mystical monism, or pantheism, that was itself the result of their intuitive/emotional approach to reality.

Finally, one cannot underestimate the socio-political importance of the Romantics, whose dominant gestures were one and the same as those of the French Revolution, with its clamor for democracy and individual rights—above all, its politics of “emotion.” Much of the credit or blame for the rampant nationalism of the last two centuries must be laid at the doorstep of the Romantics. This was manifested in the realm of literature by a new interest in the folk literature of their native land.

Romantic characteristics are usually said to have been manifested first in Germany and England in the 1790s, and not to have become prominent in France and America until two or three decades after that time. Major English writers of the period, in addition to Wordsworth and Coleridge, were the poets Robert Burns, William Blake, Lord Byron, Percy Bysshe Shelley, John Keats, and Walter Savage Landor; the prose writers Charles Lamb, William Hazlitt, Thomas De Quincey, Mary Wollstonecraft, and Leigh Hunt; and the novelists Jane Austen, Sir Walter Scott, and Mary Shelley. The span between 1786 and the close of the 18th century was that of the Gothic romances by William Beckford, Matthew Gregory Lewis, William Godwin, and, above all, Ann Radcliffe.

TEXTS	CONTEXTS
1773 Anna Letitia Aikin (later Barbauld), <i>Poems</i>	
1774 J. W. von Goethe, <i>The Sorrows of Young Werther</i>	
1776 Adam Smith, <i>The Wealth of Nations</i>	1775 American War of Independence (1775-83)
1778 Frances Burney, <i>Evelina</i>	
1779 Samuel Johnson, <i>Lives of the English Poets (1779-81)</i>	1780 Gordon Riots in London
1781 Immanuel Kant, <i>Critique of Pure Reason</i> . Jean-Jacques Rousseau, <i>Confessions</i> . J. C. Friedrich Schiller, <i>The Robbers</i>	1783 William Pitt becomes prime minister (serving until 1801 and again in 1804-6)
1784 Charlotte Smith, <i>Elegiac Sonnets</i>	1784 Death of Samuel Johnson
1785 William Cowper, <i>The Task</i>	1787 W. A. Mozart, <i>Don Giovanni</i> . Society for the Abolition of the Slave Trade founded
1786 William Beckford, <i>Vathek</i> . Robert Burns, <i>Poems, Chiefly in the Scottish Dialect</i>	1789 Fall of the Bastille (beginning of the French Revolution)
1789 Jeremy Bentham, <i>Principles of Morals and Legislation</i> . William Blake, <i>Songs of Innocence</i>	1790 J. M. W. Turner first exhibits at the Royal Academy
1790 Joanna Baillie, <i>Poems</i> . Blake, <i>The Marriage of Heaven and Hell</i> . Edmund Burke, <i>Reflections on the Revolution in France</i>	1791 Revolution in Santo Domingo (modern Haiti)
1791 William Gilpin, <i>Observations on the River Wye</i> . Thomas Paine, <i>Rights of Man</i> . Ann Radcliffe, <i>The Romance of the Forest</i>	1792 September Massacres in Paris
1792 Mary Wollstonecraft, <i>A Vindication of the Rights of Woman</i>	1793 Execution of Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette. France declares war against Britain (and then Britain against France). The Reign of Terror
1793 William Godwin, <i>Political Justice</i>	1794 The fall of Robespierre. Trials for high treason of members of the London Corresponding Society
1794 Blake, <i>Songs of Experience</i> . Godwin, <i>Caleb Williams</i> . Radcliffe, <i>The Mysteries of Udolpho</i>	1795 Pitt's Gagging Acts suppress freedom of speech and assembly in Britain
1796 Matthew Gregory Lewis, <i>The Monk</i>	1797 Mary Wollstonecraft dies from complications of childbirth
1798 Joanna Baillie, <i>Plays on the Passions, volume 1</i> . Bentham, <i>Political Economy</i> . Thomas Malthus, <i>An Essay on the Principle of Population</i> . William Wordsworth and Samuel Taylor Coleridge, <i>Lyrical Ballads</i>	1798 United Irishmen Rebellion in Ireland
1800 Maria Edgeworth, <i>Castle Rackrent</i> . Mary Robinson, <i>Lyrical Tales</i>	1801 Parliamentary Union of Ireland and Great Britain
1802-3 Walter Scott, <i>Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border</i>	1802 Treaty of Amiens. <i>Edinburgh Review</i> founded. John Constable first exhibits at the Royal Academy
1805 Scott, <i>The Lay of the Last Minstrel</i>	1804 Napoleon crowned emperor. Founding of the republic of Haiti
1807 Wordsworth, <i>Poems in Two Volumes</i> . Charlotte Smith, <i>Beachy Head</i>	1805 The French fleet defeated by the British at Trafalgar
1808 Goethe, <i>Faust</i> , part I	1807 Abolition of the slave trade
1811 Jane Austen, <i>Sense and Sensibility</i>	1808 Ludwig van Beethoven, <i>Symphonies 5 and 6</i>
1812 Lord Byron, <i>Childe Harold's Pilgrimage</i> , cantos 1 and 2. Felicia Hemans, <i>The Domestic Affections</i>	1809 <i>Quarterly Review</i> founded
1813 Austen, <i>Pride and Prejudice</i>	1811 The Prince of Wales becomes regent for George III, who is declared incurably insane
	1812 War between Britain and the United States (1812-15)

TEXTS	CONTEXTS
1814 Scott, <i>Waverley</i> . Wordsworth, <i>The Excursion</i>	
1816 Byron, <i>Childe Harold</i> , cantos 3 and 4. Coleridge, <i>Christabel</i> , "Kubla Khan." Percy Shelley, <i>Alastor</i>	1815 Napoleon defeated at Waterloo. Corn Laws passed, protecting economic interests of the landed aristocracy
1817 Byron, <i>Manfred</i> . Coleridge, <i>Biographia Literaria</i> and <i>Sibylline Leaves</i> . John Keats, <i>Poems</i>	1817 <i>Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine</i> founded. Death of Princess Charlotte. Death of Jane Austen
1818 Austen, <i>Persuasion</i> and <i>Northanger Abbey</i> . Keats, <i>Endymion</i> . Thomas Love Peacock, <i>Nightmare Abbey</i> . Mary Shelley, <i>Frankenstein</i>	1819 "Peterloo Massacre" in Manchester
1819 Byron, <i>Don Juan</i> , cantos 1 and 2. Percy Shelley, <i>The Mask of Anarchy</i>	1820 Death of George III; accession of George IV. <i>London Magazine</i> founded
1820 John Clare, <i>Poems Descriptive of Rural Life</i> . Keats, <i>Lamia</i> , <i>Isabella</i> , <i>The Eve of St. Agnes</i> , and <i>Other Poems</i> . Percy Shelley, <i>Prometheus Unbound</i>	1821 Deaths of Keats in Rome and Napoleon at St. Helena
1821 Thomas De Quincey, <i>Confessions of an English Opium-Eater</i> . Percy Shelley, <i>Adonais</i>	1822 Franz Schubert, <i>Unfinished Symphony</i> . Death of Percy Shelley in the Bay of Spezia, near Lerici, Italy
1823 Charles Lamb, <i>Essays of Elia</i>	1824 Death of Byron in Missolonghi
1824 Letitia Landon, <i>The Improvisatrice</i>	1828 Parliamentary repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts excluding Dissenters from state offices
1826 Mary Shelley, <i>The Last Man</i>	1829 Catholic Emancipation
1827 Clare, <i>The Shepherd's Calendar</i>	1830 Death of George IV; accession of William IV. Revolution in France
1828 Hemans, <i>Records of Woman</i>	1832 First Reform Bill
1830 Charles Lyell, <i>Principles of Geology</i> (1830-33). Alfred Tennyson, <i>Poems</i> , <i>Chiefly Lyrical</i>	

THE VICTORIAN PERIOD (ca. 1832-1901)

The beginning of the Victorian Period is frequently dated 1830, or alternatively 1832 (the passage of the first Reform Bill), and sometimes 1837 (the accession of Queen Victoria); it extends to the death of Victoria in 1901. Historians often subdivide the long period into three phases: Early Victorian (to 1848), Mid-Victorian (1848-70), and Late Victorian (1870-1901). Much writing of the period, whether imaginative or didactic, in verse or in prose, dealt with or reflected the pressing social, economic, religious, and intellectual issues and problems of that era. Among the notable poets were Alfred, Lord Tennyson, Robert Browning, Elizabeth Barrett Browning, Christina Rossetti, Matthew Arnold, and Gerard Manley Hopkins (whose remarkably innovative poems, however, did not become known until they were published, long after his death, in 1918). The most prominent essayists were Thomas Carlyle, John Ruskin, Arnold, and Walter Pater; the most distinguished of many excellent novelists (this was a great age of English prose fiction) were Charlotte and Emily Brontë, Charles Dickens, William Makepeace Thackeray, Elizabeth Gaskell, George Eliot, George Meredith, Anthony Trollope, Thomas Hardy, and Samuel Butler.

The Edwardian Period (1901-1910)

The span between the death of Victoria (1901) and the beginning of World War I (1914) is named for King Edward VII, who reigned from 1901 to 1910. Poets writing at the time included Thomas Hardy (who gave up novels for poetry at the beginning of the century), Alfred Noyes, William Butler Yeats, and Rudyard Kipling; dramatists included Henry Arthur Jones, Arthur Wing Pinero, James Barrie, John Galsworthy, George Bernard Shaw, and the playwrights of the Celtic Revival such as Lady Gregory, Yeats, and John M. Synge. Many of the major achievements were in prose fiction—works by Thomas Hardy, Joseph Conrad, Ford Madox Ford, John Galsworthy, H. G. Wells, Rudyard Kipling, and Henry James, who published his major final novels, *The Wings of the Dove*, *The Ambassadors*, and *The Golden Bowl*, between 1902 and 1904.

The Georgian Period

This is a term applied both to the reigns in England of the four successive Georges (1714-1830) and (more frequently) to the reign of George V (1910-36). The term “Georgian poets” usually designates a group of writers in the latter era who loomed large in four anthologies entitled *Georgian Poetry*, which were published by Edward Marsh between 1912 and 1922. Marsh favored writers we now tend to regard as relatively minor poets such as Rupert Brooke, Walter de la Mare, Ralph Hodgson, W. H. Davies, and John Masefield. “Georgian poetry” has come to connote verse which is mainly rural in subject matter, deft and delicate rather than bold and passionate in manner, and traditional rather than experimental in technique and form.

TEXTS	CONTEXTS
1830 Alfred Lord Tennyson, <i>Poems, Chiefly Lyrical</i>	1830 Opening of Liverpool and Manchester Railway
1832 Sir Charles Lyell, <i>Principles of Geology</i>	1832 First Reform Bill
1833 Thomas Carlyle, <i>Sartor Resartus</i>	1833 Factory Act. Abolition of Slavery Act.
1836 Charles Dickens, <i>Pickwick Papers</i>	1836 First train in London
1837 Carlyle, <i>The French Revolution</i>	1837 Victoria becomes queen
	1838 “People’s Charter” issued by Chartist Movement
	1840 Queen marries Prince Albert
1842 Tennyson, <i>Poems</i> . Robert Browning, <i>Dramatic Lyrics</i>	1842 Chartist Riots. Copyright Act. Mudie’s Circulating Library

TEXTS	CONTEXTS
<p>1843 John Ruskin, <i>Modern Painters</i> (vol. 1)</p> <p>1846 George Eliot, <i>The Life of Jesus</i> (translation)</p> <p>1847 Charlotte Brontë, <i>Jane Eyre</i>. Emily Brontë, <i>Wuthering Heights</i></p> <p>1848 Elizabeth Gaskell, <i>Mary Barton</i>. William Makepeace Thackeray, <i>Vanity Fair</i></p> <p>1850 Tennyson, <i>In Memoriam</i>. William Wordsworth, <i>The Prelude</i> (posthumous publication)</p> <p>1851 Ruskin, <i>Stones of Venice</i></p> <p>1853 Matthew Arnold, <i>Poems</i></p> <p>1854 Dickens, <i>Hard Times</i></p> <p>1855 Robert Browning, <i>Men and Women</i></p> <p>1857 Elizabeth Barrett Browning, <i>Aurora Leigh</i></p> <p>1859 Charles Darwin, <i>Origin of Species</i>. John Stuart Mill, <i>On Liberty</i>. Tennyson, <i>Idylls of the King</i> (books 1-4)</p> <p>1860 Dickens, <i>Great Expectations</i>. Eliot, <i>The Mill on the Floss</i></p> <p>1862 Christina Rossetti, <i>Goblin Market</i></p> <p>1864 R. Browning, <i>Dramatis Personae</i></p> <p>1865 Lewis Carroll, <i>Alice's Adventures in Wonderland</i></p> <p>1866 Algernon Charles Swinburne, <i>Poems and Ballads</i></p> <p>1867 Karl Marx, <i>Das Kapital</i></p> <p>1869 Arnold, <i>Culture and Anarchy</i>. Mill, <i>The Subjection of Women</i></p> <p>1871 Darwin, <i>Descent of Man</i></p> <p>1872 Eliot, <i>Middlemarch</i></p> <p>1873 Walter Pater, <i>Studies in the History of the Renaissance</i></p> <p>1885 W. S. Gilbert and Arthur Sullivan, <i>The Mikado</i></p> <p>1886 Robert Louis Stevenson, <i>Doctor Jekyll and Mr. Hyde</i></p> <p>1888 Rudyard Kipling, <i>Plain Tales from the Hills</i></p> <p>1889 William Butler Yeats, <i>Crossways</i></p> <p>1891 Thomas Hardy, <i>Tess of the D'Urbervilles</i>. Bernard Shaw, <i>The Quintessence of Ibsenism</i>. Oscar Wilde, <i>The Picture of Dorian Grey</i>. Arthur Conan Doyle, <i>Adventures of Sherlock Holmes</i></p> <p>1893 Shaw, <i>Mrs. Warren's Profession</i></p> <p>1895 Wilde, <i>The Importance of Being Earnest</i>. Hardy, <i>Jude the Obscure</i></p> <p>1896 A. E. Housman, <i>A Shropshire Lad</i></p> <p>1898 Hardy, <i>Wessex Poems</i></p> <p>1900 Joseph Conrad, <i>Lord Jim</i></p>	<p>1845-48 Potato famine in Ireland. Mass emigration to North America</p> <p>1846 Repeal of Corn Laws. Robert Browning marries Elizabeth Barrett</p> <p>1847 Ten Hours Factory Act</p> <p>1848 Revolution on the Continent. Second Republic established in France. Founding of Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood</p> <p>1850 Tennyson succeeds Wordsworth as Poet Laureate</p> <p>1851 Great Exhibition of science and industry at the Crystal Palace</p> <p>1854 Crimean War. Florence Nightingale organizes nurses to care for sick and wounded</p> <p>1857 Indian Mutiny. Matrimonial Causes Act</p> <p>1860 Italian unification</p> <p>1861 Death of Prince Albert</p> <p>1861-65 American Civil War</p> <p>1865 Jamaica Rebellion</p> <p>1867 Second Reform Bill</p> <p>1868 Opening of Suez Canal</p> <p>1870 Married Women's Property Act. Victory in Franco-Prussian War makes Germany a world power. Elementary Education Act</p> <p>1871 Newnham College (first women's Oxbridge college) founded at Cambridge</p> <p>1877 Queen Victoria made empress of India. Gerard Manley Hopkins joins Jesuit order</p> <p>1885 Massacre of General Gordon and his forces and fall of Khartoum</p> <p>1890 First subway line in London</p> <p>1893 Independent Labour Party</p> <p>1895 Oscar Wilde arrested and imprisoned for homosexuality</p> <p>1898 Discovery of radium</p> <p>1899 Irish Literary Theatre founded in Dublin</p> <p>1899-1902 Anglo-Boer War</p> <p>1901 Death of Queen Victoria; succession of Edward VII</p>

THE MODERN PERIOD (ca. 1914-1945?)

The dates of the Modernist movement (itself a problematic term, as there was in no sense a singular, consolidated, “movement”) are sometimes difficult to determine. The beginning of the 20th century is an extremely convenient starting point. It saw the end of Queen Victoria’s reign, marking a symbolic break from the preceding century. The turn of the century also roughly coincided with the publication of several groundbreaking theories, such as Freud’s *Interpretation of Dreams* and Einstein’s theory of special relativity. As such, there were real shifts (not merely symbolic changes) in the natural sciences, social sciences, and liberal arts occurring at this time as well. Many scholars offer 1890 as a starting point for Modernism, while others offer 1900. However, both of these are problematic, as they would include or exclude writers or texts which may or may not display Modernist tendencies.

The application of the term “modern,” of course, varies with the passage of time, but it is frequently applied specifically to the literature written since the beginning of World War I in 1914. This period has been marked by persistent and multi-dimensional experiments in subject matter, form, and style, and has produced major achievements in all the literary genres. Realism was the dominant fashion, but the disillusionment with the World Wars led to new experimentation. Among the notable writers are the poets W. B. Yeats, Wilfred Owen, T. S. Eliot, W. H. Auden, Robert Graves, and Dylan Thomas; the novelists Joseph Conrad, James Joyce, D. H. Lawrence, Dorothy Richardson, Virginia Woolf, E. M. Forster, Aldous Huxley, and Graham Greene; the dramatists G. B. Shaw, J. M. Synge, Sean O’Casey, Noel Coward. The modern age was also an important era for literary criticism; among the innovative and influential English critics were T. S. Eliot, I. A. Richards, Virginia Woolf, F. R. Leavis, and William Empson.

Anglophone authors—authors who speak and write in the English language in all the British Isles—come to prominence during this period. A number of the writers listed above were in fact natives of Ireland, Scotland, and Wales. Of the Modern Period especially it can be said that much of the greatest “English” literature was written by the Irish writers Yeats, Shaw, Synge, Joyce, O’Casey, Beckett, and Iris Murdoch.

By convention and convenience, most scholars use 1945 as the endpoint for Modernism. The date marks the end of WWII, and a momentous shift in world politics as well as in the most prominent social, cultural, and literary values. But there is an argument to be made for using 1939 as the end point of the movement, because it is the year in which Joyce’s *Finnegan’s Wake* was published. Insofar as Modernism is characterized chiefly by experimentation in structure, form, and technique, *Finnegan’s Wake* is the ultimate work of Modernism, the pinnacle of this experimentation and novelty. After the *Wake*, it is no longer possible for a writer to attempt to supersede his or her predecessors in the way Modernists often strove to do. As such, the Modernist movement had reached its natural teleological conclusion.

“High Modernism”

The decade of the 1920s is generally considered the golden age of modernist literature. The year 1922 may be the *annus mirabilis* of the period, for it saw the publication of both James Joyce’s *Ulysses* and T. S. Eliot’s *The Waste Land*. This period saw the publication of Virginia Woolf’s *Mrs. Dalloway*, and Marcel Proust’s *In Search of Lost Time*.

TEXTS	CONTEXTS
<p>1899, 1902 Joseph Conrad, <i>Heart of Darkness</i></p>	<p>1900 Max Planck, quantum theory 1901 First wireless communication across the Atlantic 1901-10 Reign of Edward VII 1902 End of the Anglo-Boer War 1903 Henry Ford introduces the first mass-produced car. Wright Brothers make the first successful airplane flight 1905 Albert Einstein, theory of special relativity. Impressionist exhibition, London</p>
<p>1910 George Bernard Shaw, <i>Pygmalion</i></p>	<p>1910 Postimpressionist exhibition, London 1910-36 Reign of George V</p>
<p>1913 Ezra Pound, "A Few Don'ts by an Imagiste"</p>	
<p>1914 James Joyce, <i>Dubliners</i>. Thomas Hardy, <i>Satires of Circumstance</i></p>	<p>1914-18 World War I</p>
<p>1914-15 <i>Blast</i></p>	
<p>1917 T. S. Eliot, "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock"</p>	<p>1916 Easter Rising in Dublin</p>
<p>1916 Joyce, <i>A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man</i></p>	<p>1918 Armistice. Franchise Act grants vote to women 30 and over</p>
<p>1918 Gerard Manley Hopkins, <i>Poems</i></p>	<p>1920 Treaty of Versailles. League of Nations formed</p>
<p>1920 D. H. Lawrence, <i>Women in Love</i>. Wilfred Owen, <i>Poems</i></p>	<p>1921-22 Formation of Irish Free State with Northern Ireland (Ulster) remaining part of Great Britain</p>
<p>1921 William Butler Yeats, <i>Michael Robartes and the Dancer</i></p>	
<p>1922 Joyce, <i>Ulysses</i>. Eliot, <i>The Waste Land</i>. Katherine Mansfield, <i>The Garden Party and Other Stories</i></p>	
<p>1924 E. M. Forster, <i>A Passage to India</i></p>	
<p>1927 Virginia Woolf, <i>To the Lighthouse</i></p>	
<p>1928 Yeats, <i>The Tower</i></p>	<p>1928 Women 21 and over granted voting rights</p>
<p>1929 Woolf, <i>A Room of One's Own</i>. Robert Graves, <i>Goodbye to All That</i></p>	<p>1929 Stock market crash; Great Depression begins</p>
	<p>1933 Hitler comes to power in Germany</p>
<p>1935 Eliot, <i>Murder in the Cathedral</i></p>	<p>1936 Edward VIII succeeds George V, but abdicates in favor of his brother, crowned as George VI</p>
	<p>1936-39 Spanish Civil War</p>
<p>1937 David Jones, <i>In Parenthesis</i></p>	<p>1939-45 World War II</p>
<p>1939 Joyce, <i>Finnegans Wake</i>. Yeats, <i>Last Poems and Two Plays</i></p>	<p>1940 Fall of France. Battle of Britain</p>
<p>1940 W. H. Auden, <i>Another Time</i></p>	<p>1941-45 The Holocaust</p>
<p>1943 Eliot, <i>Four Quartets</i></p>	
<p>1945 Auden, <i>Collected Poems</i>. George Orwell, <i>Animal Farm</i></p>	<p>1945 First atomic bombs dropped, on Japan</p>
<p>1946 Dylan Thomas, <i>Deaths and Entrances</i></p>	

THE POSTMODERN PERIOD (ca. 1945? onward)

“Postmodernism” is a notoriously ambiguous term, especially as it refers to literature. It can be seen as a response to the elitism of high modernism as well as to the horrors of World War II. Postmodern literature is characterized by a disjointed, fragmented pastiche of high and low culture that reflects the absence of tradition and structure in a world driven by technology and consumerism. The post-WWII West was marked by the cold war and the excesses of consumption. Postmodernism differs from Modernism by blurring the conventional boundary between “high” and “low” culture, by a completely loosened structure in both time and space, and by multiple openings rather than a closure. It rejects to conform to popular taste and combines heterogeneous elements, making it cater to a more sophisticated readership.

The French theorist Jean-François Lyotard succinctly defined postmodernism as “incredulity towards metanarratives”; that is, a skepticism toward the “grand narratives” that seek to explain and plot human life and history. Literary postmodernism is generally characterized by features such as: a mixing of styles (“high” and “low,” for example) in the same text; discontinuity of tone, point of view, register, and logical sequence; apparently random unexpected intrusions and disruptions in the text; a self-consciousness about language and literary technique, especially concerning the use of metaphor and symbol, and the use of self-referential tropes. Even though the writers most often associated with postmodernism may deal with serious themes, their work often has absurd, playful, or comic aspects, and sometimes makes special use of parody and pastiche and of references to other texts and artifacts.

Characterized by an attempt to establish transhistorical or transcultural validity, it claims that search for reality is pointless, as the “real” is conditioned by time, place, race, class, gender, and sexuality. There is no knowledge or experience that is superior or inferior to another. This period is largely influenced by a number of events. Genocide that occurred during the WWII, Soviet gulags, the Chinese Cultural Revolution, mass destruction caused by atomic bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, insecurity of Cold War Era, the issues of postcolonialism, and the supremacy of multinational corporations and post-industrialism with new technologies, violence, counter culture and consumer culture shaped the perception of new authors. Julian Barnes, Don DeLillo, Toni Morrison, Vladimir Nabokov, Thomas Pynchon, Salman Rushdie, and Kurt Vonnegut are among many who are considered postmodern authors. Magic Realists such as Gabriel García Márquez, Luis Borges, Alejo Carpentier, Günter Grass, and Salman Rushdie flourish with surrealist writings embroidered in the conventions of realism.

In recent decades, some of the most notable achievements in the English language have been written by authors who are natives of recently liberated English colonies—often referred to as postcolonial authors—including the Rhodesian Doris Lessing; the South Africans Nadine Gordimer, Athol Fugard, and J. M. Coetzee; the West Indians V. S. Naipaul and Derek Walcott; the Nigerians Chinua Achebe and Wole Soyinka; and the Indian novelists R. K. Narayan, Anita Desai, and Salman Rushdie.

TEXTS	CONTEXTS
<p>1940 W. H. Auden, <i>Another Time</i></p> <p>1943 Eliot, <i>Four Quartets</i></p> <p>1945 Auden, <i>Collected Poems</i>. George Orwell, <i>Animal Farm</i></p> <p>1946 Dylan Thomas, <i>Deaths and Entrances</i></p> <p>1949 Orwell, <i>Nineteen Eighty-Four</i></p> <p>1953 Premiere of Samuel Beckett's <i>Waiting for Godot</i></p> <p>1958 Chinua Achebe, <i>Things Fall Apart</i></p> <p>1962 Doris Lessing, <i>The Golden Notebook</i></p> <p>1964 Philip Larkin, <i>The Whitsun Weddings</i></p> <p>1966 Nadine Gordimer, <i>The Late Bourgeois World</i>. Tom Stoppard, <i>Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead</i>. Jean Rhys, <i>Wide Sargasso Sea</i></p> <p>1971 V. S. Naipaul, <i>In a Free State</i></p> <p>1975 Seamus Heaney, <i>North</i></p> <p>1979 Caryl Churchill, <i>Cloud 9</i></p> <p>1980 J. M. Coetzee, <i>Waiting for the Barbarians</i></p> <p>1981 Salman Rushdie, <i>Midnight's Children</i>. Brian Friel, <i>Translations</i></p> <p>1985 Production of Hanif Kureishi's <i>My Beautiful Laundrette</i>. Margaret Atwood, <i>The Handmaid's Tale</i></p> <p>1988 Rushdie, <i>The Satanic Verses</i></p> <p>1989 Kazuo Ishiguro, <i>The Remains of the Day</i></p> <p>1990 Derek Walcott, <i>Omeros</i></p> <p>1992 Thom Gunn, <i>The Man with Night Sweats</i></p> <p>1993 Tom Stoppard, <i>Arcadia</i></p> <p>1997 Arundhati Roy, <i>The God of Small Things</i></p> <p>1999 Carol Ann Duffy, <i>The World's Wife</i></p> <p>2000 Zadie Smith, <i>White Teeth</i></p> <p>2001 Ian McEwan, <i>Atonement</i></p> <p>2002 Paul Muldoon, <i>Moy Sand and Gravel</i></p>	<p>1940 Fall of France. Battle of Britain</p> <p>1941-45 The Holocaust</p> <p>1945 First atomic bombs dropped, on Japan</p> <p>1947 India and Pakistan become independent nations</p> <p>1948 Empire Windrush brings West Indians to U.K.</p> <p>1950 Apartheid laws passed in South Africa</p> <p>1956 Suez crisis</p> <p>1957 Ghana becomes independent</p> <p>1960 Nigeria becomes independent</p> <p>1961 Berlin Wall erected</p> <p>1962 Cuban missile crisis. Uganda, Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago become independent</p> <p>1965 U.S. troops land in South Vietnam</p> <p>1966 Barbados and Guyana become independent</p> <p>1969 Apollo moon landing</p> <p>1971 Indo-Pakistan War, leading to creation of Bangladesh</p> <p>1972 Britain enters European Common Market</p> <p>1973 U.S. troops leave Vietnam</p> <p>1979 Islamic Revolution in Iran; the shah flees. Soviets invade Afghanistan</p> <p>1979-90 Margaret Thatcher is British prime minister</p> <p>1980-88 Iran-Iraq War</p> <p>1982 Falklands War</p> <p>1989 Fall of the Berlin Wall. Tiananmen Square, Beijing, demonstration and massacre</p> <p>1991 Collapse of the Soviet Union</p> <p>1994 Democracy comes to South Africa</p> <p>1997 Labour Party victory in the U.K.</p> <p>1998 British hand over of Hong Kong to China. Northern Ireland Assembly established</p> <p>2001 September 11 attacks destroy World Trade Center</p> <p>2002 Euro becomes sole currency in most of the EU</p> <p>2003 Invasion of Iraq led by U.S. and U.K.</p>

TEXTS	CONTEXTS
2006 Kiran Desai, <i>The Inheritance of Loss</i>	2005 Bombings of London transport system 2010 David Cameron, Conservative, becomes PM

Periods of American Literature

The division of American literature into convenient historical segments, or “periods,” lacks the degree of consensus among literary scholars that we find with reference to English literature. The temporal divisions and their names, especially since the efforts to do justice to literature written by women and by ethnic minorities, are variable. Some recent historians, anthologists, and teachers of American literature simply divide their survey into dated sections, without affixing period names. A prominent tendency, however, is to recognize the importance of major wars in marking significant changes in literature. This tendency, as the scholar Cushing Strout has remarked, “suggests that there is an order in American political history more visible and compelling than that indicated by specifically literary or intellectual categories.”

The following divisions of American literary history recognize the importance assigned by many literary historians to the Revolutionary War (1775-81), the Civil War (1861-65), World War I (1914-18), and World War II (1939-45). Under these broad divisions are listed some of the more widely used terms to distinguish periods and sub-periods of American literature. These terms, it will be noted, are diverse in kind; they may signify a span of time, or a type of political organization, or a prominent intellectual or imaginative mode, or a predominant literary form.

THE COLONIAL PERIOD (1607-1775)

This overall era, from the founding of the first settlement at Jamestown to the outbreak of the American Revolution, is often called the Colonial Period. Writings were for the most part religious, practical, or historical. Notable among the 17th-century writers of journals and narratives about the founding and early history of some of the colonies were William Bradford, John Winthrop, and the theologian Cotton Mather. In the following century Jonathan Edwards was a major philosopher as well as theologian, and Benjamin Franklin an early American master of lucid and cogent prose. Not until 1937, when Edward Taylor’s writings were first published from manuscript, was Taylor discovered to have been an able religious poet in the metaphysical style of the English devotional poets Herbert and Crashaw. Anne Bradstreet was the chief Colonial poet of secular and domestic as well as religious subjects.

The publication in 1773 of *Poems on Various Subjects* by Phillis Wheatley, then a nineteen-year-old slave who had been born in Africa, inaugurated the long and distinguished, but until recently neglected, line of black writers (or by what has come to be the preferred name, African-American writers) in America. The complexity and diversity of the African-American cultural heritage—both Western and African, oral and written, slave and free, Judeo-Christian and pagan, plantation and urban, integrationist and black nationalist—have effected tensions and fusions that, over the course of time, have produced a highly innovative and distinctive literature, as well as musical forms that have come to be considered America’s most important contribution to the Western musical tradition.

The period between the Stamp Act of 1765 and 1790 is sometimes distinguished as the **Revolutionary Age**. It was the time of Thomas Paine’s influential revolutionary tracts; of Thomas Jefferson’s “Statute of Virginia for Religious Freedom,” “Declaration of Independence,” and many other writings; of *The Federalist Papers* in support of the

Constitution, most notably those by Alexander Hamilton and James Madison; and of the patriotic and satiric poems by Philip Freneau and Joel Barlow.

TEXTS	CONTEXTS
<p>Peoples indigenous to the Americas orally perform and transmit a variety of “literary” genres that include, among others, speeches, songs, and stories</p> <p>1493 Columbus, “Letter to Luis de Santangel Regarding the First Voyage”</p> <p>1542 Álvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca, <i>The Relation of Álvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca</i></p> <p>1552 Bartolomé de las Casas, <i>The Very Brief Relation of the Devastation of the Indies</i></p> <p>1624 John Smith, <i>The General History of Virginia, New England, and the Summer Isles</i></p> <p>1630 John Winthrop delivers his sermon “A Model of Christian Charity” (pub. 1838)</p> <p>1630-50 William Bradford writes <i>Of Plymouth Plantation</i> (pub. 1856)</p> <p>1637 Thomas Morton, <i>New English Canaan</i></p> <p>1643 Roger Williams, <i>A Key into the Language of America</i></p> <p>1650 Anne Bradstreet, <i>The Tenth Muse</i></p> <p>1662 Michael Wigglesworth, <i>The Day of Doom</i></p> <p>1673-1729 Samuel Sewall keeps his <i>Diary</i> (pub. 1878-82)</p> <p>1682 Mary Rowlandson’s <i>Narrative of the Captivity and Restoration</i></p>	<p>1000-1300 Anasazi communities inhabit southwestern regions</p> <p>1492 Christopher Columbus arrives in the Bahamas. between 4 and 7 million Native Americans estimated in what is now the United States, including Alaska</p> <p>1500 Native American populations begin to be ravaged by European diseases</p> <p>1514 Bartolome de las Casas petitions Spanish Crown to treat Native American peoples as humanely as other subject populations</p> <p>1519-21 Cortes conquers Aztecs in Mexico</p> <p>1526 Spanish explorers bring first African slaves to South Carolina</p> <p>1539 First printing press in the Americas set up in Mexico City. Hernando de Soto invades Florida</p> <p>1558-1603 Reign of Elizabeth I</p> <p>1584 Walter Raleigh lands on “island” of Roanoke; names it “Virginia” for Queen Elizabeth</p> <p>1603-13 Samuel de Champlain explores the Saint Lawrence River; founds Quebec</p> <p>1607 Jamestown is established in Virginia. Powhatan confederacy saves colonists from starving; teaches them to plant tobacco</p> <p>1619 20 Africans arrive in Jamestown on a Dutch vessel as indentured servants</p> <p>1620 Mayflower drops anchor in Plymouth Harbor</p> <p>1621 First Thanksgiving, at Plymouth</p> <p>1630-43 Immigration of English Puritans to Massachusetts Bay</p> <p>1637 Pequot War</p> <p>1638 Anne Hutchinson banished from Bay Colony for challenging Puritan beliefs</p> <p>1675-76 King Philip’s War destroys power of Native American tribes in New England</p> <p>1681 William Penn founds Pennsylvania</p>
<p>1682-1725 Edward Taylor writing his <i>Preparatory Meditations</i> (pub. 1939, 1960)</p>	

TEXTS	CONTEXTS
<p>1690 <i>The New-England Primer</i></p> <p>1702 Cotton Mather, <i>Magnolia Christi Americana</i></p> <p>1704-05 Sarah Kemble Knight keeps <i>The Private Journal of a Journey from Boston to New York</i> (pub. 1825)</p> <p>1741 Jonathan Edwards, <i>Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God</i></p> <p>1768 Samson Occom, <i>A Short Narrative of My Life</i> (pub. 1982)</p> <p>1771-90 Benjamin Franklin continues his <i>Autobiography</i> (Part I pub. 1818)</p> <p>1773 Phillis Wheatley, <i>Poems on Various Subjects</i></p> <p>1774 John Woolman, <i>The Journal of John Woolman</i></p> <p>1774-83 John and Abigail Adams exchange letters (pub. 1840, 1875)</p>	<p>1692 Salem witchcraft trials</p> <p>1718 French found New Orleans</p> <p>1726-56 The “Great Awakening”</p> <p>1741 Vitus Bering discovers Alaska</p> <p>1755-63 French and Indian Wars</p> <p>1773 Boston Tea Party</p> <p>1775-83 War for American Independence</p>

THE EARLY NATIONAL PERIOD (1775-1865)

The years 1775-1828, the Early National Period ending with the triumph of Jacksonian democracy in 1828, signaled the emergence of a national imaginative literature, including the first American stage comedy (Royall Tyler's *The Contrast*, 1787), the earliest American novel (William Hill Brown's *The Power of Sympathy*, 1789), and the establishment in 1815 of the first enduring American magazine, *The North American Review*. Washington Irving achieved international fame with his essays and stories; Charles Brockden Brown wrote distinctively American versions of the Gothic novel of mystery and terror; the career of James Fenimore Cooper, the first major American novelist, was well launched; and William Cullen Bryant and Edgar Allan Poe wrote poetry that was relatively independent of English precursors. In the year 1760 was published the first of a long series of slave narratives and autobiographies written by African-American slaves who had escaped or been freed. Most of these were published between 1830 and 1865, including Frederick Douglass' *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass* (1845) and Harriet Jacobs' *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* (1861).

The Romantic Period (1828-1865)

The span 1828-65 from the Jacksonian era to the Civil War, is often identified as the **Romantic Period** in America. It marks the full coming of age of a distinctively American literature. This period is sometimes known as the **American Renaissance**, the title of F. O. Matthiessen's influential book (1941) about its outstanding writers, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Henry David Thoreau, Edgar Allan Poe, Herman Melville, and Nathaniel Hawthorne. This period is also sometimes called the **Age of Transcendentalism**, after the philosophical and literary movement, centered on Emerson, that was dominant in New England. In all the major genres except drama, writers produced works of an originality and excellence not exceeded in later American literature. Emerson, Thoreau, and the early feminist Margaret Fuller shaped the ideas, ideals, and literary aims of many contemporary and later American writers. It was the age not only of continuing writings by William Cullen Bryant, Washington Irving, and James Fenimore Cooper, but also of the novels and short stories of Poe, Hawthorne, Melville, Harriet Beecher Stowe, and the southern novelist William Gilmore Simms; of the poetry of Poe, John Greenleaf Whittier, Emerson, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, and the most innovative and influential of all American poets, Walt Whitman; and of the beginning of distinguished American criticism in the essays of Poe, Simms, and James Russell Lowell. The tradition of African-American poetry by women was continued by Francis Ellen Watkins Harper, and the African-American novel was inaugurated by William Wells Brown's *Clotel* (1853) and by Harriet E. Wilson's *Our Nig* (1859).

TEXTS	CONTEXTS
<p>1776 Thomas Paine, <i>Common Sense</i></p> <p>1780s Annis Boudinot Stockton publishes poems in magazines and newspapers</p> <p>1782 J. Hector St. John de Crèvecoeur, <i>Letters from an American Farmer</i></p> <p>1786 Philip Freneau, <i>Poems</i></p> <p>1787 Thomas Jefferson, <i>Notes on the State of Virginia</i>. Royall Tyler, <i>The Contrast</i></p> <p>1787-88 <i>The Federalist papers</i></p> <p>1789 Olaudah Equiano, <i>The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano</i></p> <p>1790 Judith Sargent Murray, <i>On the Equality of the Sexes</i></p> <p>1791 Susanna Rowson, <i>Charlotte: A Tale of Truth</i></p> <p>1797 Hannah Foster, <i>The Coquette</i></p> <p>1799 Charles Brockden Brown, <i>Edgar Huntly</i></p> <p>1815 Founding of the <i>North American Review</i></p> <p>1817 William Cullen Bryant, "Thanatopsis"</p> <p>1820 Washington Irving, <i>The Sketch Book</i></p> <p>1821 Bryant, <i>Poems</i></p> <p>1823 James Fenimore Cooper, <i>The Pioneers</i></p> <p>1826 Cooper, <i>The Last of the Mohicans</i></p> <p>1827 David Cusick, <i>Sketches Of Ancient History of the Six Nations</i>. Lydia Sigourney, <i>Poems</i>. Catharine Sedgwick, <i>Hope Leslie</i></p> <p>1828-30 Cherokee Council composes <i>Memorials to Congress</i></p> <p>1829 William Apess, <i>A Son of the Forest</i>. David Walker, <i>Appeal</i></p> <p>1833 Black Hawk, <i>Life</i></p> <p>1835 William Gilmore Simms, <i>The Yemassee: A Romance of Carolina</i></p> <p>1836 Ralph Waldo Emerson, <i>Nature</i></p>	<p>1775-83 War for American Independence</p> <p>1776 Declaration of Independence</p> <p>1783 Britain opens "Old Northwest" (region south of Great Lakes) to United States after Treaty of Paris ends American Revolution</p> <p>1787 U.S. Constitution adopted</p> <p>1789 George Washington elected first president</p> <p>1791 Washington D.C. established as U.S. capital</p> <p>1803 United States buys Louisiana Territory from France</p> <p>1812-14 Second war against England</p> <p>1815 Treaty of Ghent, ending the second war with England: before news of the treaty reaches Andrew Jackson, he leads American troops to victory over the British at the Battle of New Orleans.</p> <p>1819 Spain exchanges Florida for U.S. assumption of \$5 million in claims</p> <p>1820 Missouri Compromise admits Missouri as a slave state, Maine as a free state, and excludes slavery in the Louisiana Territory north of latitude 36° 30'</p> <p>1821 Sequoyah (George Guess) invents syllabary in which Cherokee language can be written</p> <p>1823 Monroe Doctrine warns all European powers not to establish new colonies on either American continent</p> <p>1825 Erie Canal opens, connecting Great Lakes region with the Atlantic</p> <p>1827 Baltimore & Ohio, first U.S. railroad</p> <p>1827-28 Cherokee Nation ratifies its new constitution. The newspaper <i>The Cherokee Phoenix</i> founded</p> <p>1829-37 President Andrew Jackson encourages westward migration of white population</p> <p>1830 Congress passes Indian Removal Act, allowing Jackson to negotiate treaties with the eastern tribes for their relocation west of the Mississippi</p> <p>1831 William Lloyd Garrison starts <i>The Liberator</i>, antislavery journal. Nat Turner leads a slave rebellion in Southampton County, Virginia; approximately 60 whites are killed and 200 blacks are killed in retaliation</p>

TEXTS	CONTEXTS
<p>1837 Nathaniel Hawthorne, <i>Twice-Told Tales</i></p> <p>1839 Caroline Stansbury Kirkland, <i>A New Home-Who'll Follow?</i></p> <p>1840 Richard Henry Dana Jr., <i>Two Years before the Mast</i></p> <p>1843 Margaret Fuller, "The Great Lawsuit." Lydia Maria Child, <i>Letters from New-York</i></p> <p>1845 Edgar Allan Poe, "The Raven." Frederick Douglass, <i>Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass</i></p>	<p>1837 Financial panic: failures of numerous banks lead to severe unemployment that persists into the early 1840s</p> <p>1838 Around this time, Underground Railroad begins aiding slaves escaping north, often to Canada</p> <p>1838-39 "Trail of Tears"; Cherokees forced from their homelands by federal troops</p> <p>1840 Washingtonian Temperance Society founded; temperance quickly emerges as one of the most popular social reform movements of the period</p> <p>1844 Samuel Morse invents telegraph</p> <p>1845 United States annexes Texas</p> <p>1846 David Wilmot, a congressman from Pennsylvania, proposes in Congress that slavery be banned in territories gained from the Mexican War; his proviso is defeated</p> <p>1846-48 United States wages war against Mexico; Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo cedes entire Southwest to United States</p>
<p>1847 Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, <i>Evangeline</i></p> <p>1850 Nathaniel Hawthorne, <i>The Scarlet Letter</i></p> <p>1851 Herman Melville, <i>Moby-Dick</i></p> <p>1852 Harriet Beecher Stowe, <i>Uncle Tom's Cabin</i></p> <p>1853 William Wells Brown, <i>Clotel</i></p> <p>1854 Henry David Thoreau, <i>Walden</i>. Frances Ellen Watkins Harper, <i>Poems on Miscellaneous Subjects</i></p>	<p>1847 Brigham Young leads Mormons from Nauvoo, Illinois, to Salt Lake, Utah Territory</p> <p>1848 Seneca Falls Convention inaugurates campaign for women's rights</p> <p>1848-49 Beginning years of the California Gold Rush, which brings hundreds of thousands of new settlers to California</p> <p>1850 Fugitive Slave Act of the Compromise of 1850 obliges free states to return escaped slaves to slaveholders</p> <p>1854 Republican Party formed from antislavery factions. Kansas-Nebraska Act repeals the Missouri Compromise, making it legal for white voting residents of a territory to determine whether it should be admitted as a slave or free state</p>
<p>1855 Walt Whitman, <i>Leaves of Grass</i>. P. T. Barnum, <i>The Life of P.T. Barnum, Written by Himself</i></p> <p>1857 Fanny Fern (Sarah Willis Parton), <i>Fresh Leaves</i></p> <p>1858 Abraham Lincoln, "A House Divided"</p> <p>1859 E.D.E.N. Southworth, <i>The Hidden Hand</i></p> <p>1860-65 Emily Dickinson writes several hundred poems</p> <p>1861 Harriet Jacobs, <i>Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl</i>. Rebecca Harding Davis, <i>Life in the Iron-Mills</i></p> <p>1862 Elizabeth Stoddard, <i>The Morgesons</i></p>	<p>1857 Supreme Court Dred Scott decision denies citizenship to African Americans</p> <p>1859 First successful U.S. oil well drilled, in Pennsylvania</p> <p>1860 Short-lived Pony Express runs from Missouri to California</p> <p>1861 South Carolina batteries fire on U.S. fort, initiating the Civil War; Southern states secede from the Union</p> <p>1861-65 Civil War</p> <p>1863 Emancipation Proclamation. Battle of Gettysburg</p> <p>1865 Thirteenth Amendment abolishes slavery in the U.S.</p>

REALISM (1865-1914)

The cataclysm of the bloody Civil War and Reconstruction, followed by a burgeoning industrialism and urbanization in the North, profoundly altered American self-awareness, and also American literary modes. 1865-1900 is often known as the Realistic Period, by reference to the novels by Mark Twain, William Dean Howells, and Henry James, as well as by John W. DeForest, Harold Frederic, and the African-American novelist Charles W. Chesnutt. These works, though diverse, are often labeled “realistic” in contrast to the “romances” of their predecessors in prose fiction: Poe, Hawthorne, and Melville. Some realistic authors grounded their fiction in a regional milieu; these include (in addition to Mark Twain’s novels on the Mississippi River region) Bret Harte in California, Sarah Orne Jewett in Maine, Mary Wilkins Freeman in Massachusetts, and George W. Cable and Kate Chopin in Louisiana. Chopin has become prominent as an early and major feminist novelist. Whitman continued writing poetry up to the last decade of the century, and (unknown to him and almost everyone else) was joined by Emily Dickinson; although only seven of Dickinson’s more than a thousand short poems were published in her lifetime, she is now recognized as one of the most distinctive and eminent of American poets. Sidney Lanier published his experiments in versification based on the meters of music; the African-American author Paul Laurence Dunbar wrote both poems and novels between 1893 and 1905; and in the 1890s Stephen Crane, although he was only 29 when he died, published short poems in free verse that anticipate the experiments of Ezra Pound and the Imagists, and wrote also the brilliantly innovative short stories and short novels that look forward to two later narrative modes: naturalism and impressionism. The years 1900-1914—although James, Howells, and Mark Twain were still writing, and Edith Wharton was publishing her earlier novels—are sometimes discriminated as the **Naturalistic Period**, in recognition of the powerful although sometimes crudely wrought novels by Frank Norris, Jack London, and Theodore Dreiser, which typically represent characters who are joint victims of their instinctual drives and of external sociological forces; see naturalism, under realism and naturalism.

TEXTS	CONTEXTS
<p>1865 Walt Whitman, <i>Drum-Taps</i></p>	<p>1865 Civil War ends. Reconstruction begins. Lincoln assassinated. Thirteenth Amendment ratified, prohibiting slavery</p>
<p>1868 Louisa May Alcott, <i>Little Women</i></p>	<p>1867 United States purchases Alaska from Russia. Jesse Chisholm maps out the Chisholm Trail, connecting Texas cattle ranches to railheads in Kansas City, Cheyenne, Dodge City, and Abilene</p>
<p>1870 Bret Harte, <i>The Luck of Roaring Camp and other Sketches</i></p>	<p>1868 Fourteenth Amendment passed, guaranteeing citizenship to all peoples born in the United States (exclusive of Native peoples). Congress institutes eight-hour workday for federal employees. Sweatshops, using mostly immigrant labor, begin to proliferate in cities</p>
<p>1872 Mark Twain, <i>Roughing It</i></p>	<p>1869 First transcontinental railroad completed by construction crews composed largely of Chinese laborers. Susan B. Anthony elected president of American Equal Rights Association; Elizabeth Cady Stanton elected president of National Women's Suffrage Association</p>
<p>1876 Charlot (Slemhakkah), "[He has filled graves with our bones]"</p>	<p>1870 Fifteenth Amendment, giving African American men the right to vote, ratified</p>
<p>1878 Henry James, <i>Daisy Miller</i></p>	<p>1871 Indian Appropriation Act ends the practice of negotiating treaties with the tribes as sovereign nations</p>
<p>1880 Joel Chandler Harris, <i>Uncle Remus: His Songs and Sayings</i></p>	<p>1872 Yellowstone, first U.S. national park, established</p>
<p>1881 Helen Hunt Jackson, <i>A Century of Dishonor</i></p>	<p>1873 Economic panic: financial depression lasts until 1879</p>
<p>1883 Emma Lazarus, "The New Colossus"</p>	<p>1874 Women's Christian Temperance Union founded in Cleveland. Invention of barbed wire effectively ends the open range</p>
<p>1884 Twain, <i>Adventures of Huckleberry Finn</i></p>	<p>1876 Custer's regiment defeated by the Sioux and Cheyenne at Little Big Horn River, Montana. Alexander Graham Bell invents the telephone</p>
<p>1885 Maria Amparo Ruiz de Burton, <i>The Squatter and the Don</i></p>	<p>1877 Reconstruction ends. Segregationist Jim Crow laws begin</p>
<p>1889 Theodore Roosevelt, <i>The Winning of the West</i>. Hamlin Garland, "Under the Lion's Paw"</p>	<p>1879 Thomas Edison invents the electric lightbulb. Female lawyers permitted to argue before Supreme Court</p>
<p>1890 Ambrose Bierce, "An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge"</p>	<p>1880-1910 Massive immigration from Europe</p>
<p>1892 Charlotte Perkins Gilman, "The Yellow Wallpaper"</p>	<p>1881 Tuskegee Institute founded</p>
<p>1895 Stephen Crane, <i>The Red Badge of Courage</i></p>	<p>1882 J.D. Rockefeller organizes Standard Oil Trust. Chinese Exclusion Act instituted</p>
<p>1896 Paul Laurence Dunbar, <i>Lyrics of a Lowly Life</i>. James Mooney publishes <i>Ghost Dance Songs</i></p>	<p>1884 Tailors' strike in New York City brings national attention to sweatshops</p>
<p>1897 Crane, <i>The Open Boat and Other Tales of Adventure</i></p>	<p>1886 Statue of Liberty dedicated. Haymarket Square labor riot leaves eleven dead. American Federation of Labor organized</p>
<p></p>	<p>1887 General Allotment Act or Dawes Act permits the president to divide tribally-owned lands into individual allotments to be held in trust for 25 years, with "surplus" lands to be sold to non-Indians. This led the Indians to lose some 90 million acres of land by the time Dawes was repealed in 1934</p>
<p></p>	<p>1890 U.S. Bureau of Census declares the "frontier" "to be closed." There is no more "free" or "unoccupied" land. Sitting Bull killed. Massacre of Big Foot's Minneconjou band by federal troops at Wounded Knee Creek ends the Ghost Dance among the Sioux.</p>
<p></p>	<p>1896 Plessy v. Ferguson upholds segregated transportation</p>
<p></p>	<p>1897-98 Klondike Gold Rush</p>

TEXTS	CONTEXTS
<p>1899 Charles Chesnutt, <i>The Conjure Woman and The Life of His Youth and Other Stories of the Color Line</i>. Kate Chopin, <i>The Awakening</i>. Frank Norris, <i>McTeague</i></p>	
<p>1900 Theodore Dreiser, <i>Sister Carrie</i>. Ida B. Wells-Barnett, <i>Mob-Rule in New Orleans</i>. Pauline Hopkins, <i>Contending Forces</i>. James Weldon Johnson, <i>Lift Every Voice and Sing</i></p>	<p>1900 U.S. population exceeds 75 million</p>
<p>1901 Zitkala Sa, <i>Impressions of an Indian Childhood and The School Days of an Indian Girl</i>. Norris, <i>The Octopus</i>. London, "The Law of Life." Booker T. Washington, <i>Up From Slavery</i></p>	<p>1901 J.P. Morgan founds U.S. Steel Corporation. first transatlantic radio. Oil discovered in Spindletop, Texas</p>
<p>1902 James, <i>The Wings of the Dove</i>.</p>	
<p>1903 W. E. B. DuBois, <i>The Souls of Black Folks</i>. London, <i>The Call of the Wild</i>. James, <i>The Ambassadors</i>. Mary Austin, <i>The Land of Little Rain</i></p>	<p>1903 Henry Ford founds Ford Motor Co. Wright brothers make the first successful airplane flight. <i>The Great Train Robbery</i> is first U.S. cinematic narrative</p>
<p>1904 Edith Wharton, "The Other Two"</p>	<p>1904 National Child Labor Committee formed</p>
<p>1905 Wharton, <i>The House of Mirth</i>. William Dean Howells, "Editha"</p>	<p>1905 Industrial Workers of the World (the Wobblies) founded</p>
<p>1906 Upton Sinclair, <i>The Jungle</i></p>	<p>1906 April 18: San Francisco earthquake and fire</p>
<p>1907 Henry Adams, <i>The Education of Henry Adams</i></p>	<p>1909 National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) founded</p>
<p>1910 Jane Adams, <i>Twenty Years at Hull-House</i>. Sui Sin Far, <i>Mrs. Spring Fragrance</i></p>	<p>1910 Mexican Revolution</p>
<p>1912 James Weldon Johnson, <i>The Autobiography of an Ex-Colored Man</i></p>	<p>1914 U.S. Marines invade and occupy Vera Cruz, Mexico. Panama Canal opens</p>

MODERNISM (1914-1939)

The era between the two world wars, marked by the trauma of the great economic depression beginning in 1929, was that of the emergence of what is still known as “modern literature,” which in America reached an eminence rivaling that of the American Renaissance of the mid-19th century; unlike most of the authors of that earlier period, however, the American modernists also achieved widespread international recognition and influence. *Poetry* magazine, founded in Chicago by Harriet Monroe in 1912, published many innovative authors. Her publication of T. S. Eliot’s “The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock” (after being urged to do so by Ezra Pound) in 1915 can be seen as the fundamental genesis of Modernism. Among the notable poets of the period were Edgar Lee Masters, Edwin Arlington Robinson, Robert Frost, Carl Sandburg, Wallace Stevens, William Carlos Williams, Ezra Pound, Robinson Jeffers, Marianne Moore, T. S. Eliot, Edna St. Vincent Millay, and e. e. cummings—authors who wrote in an unexampled variety of poetic modes. These included the Imagism of Amy Lowell, H. D. (Hilda Doolittle), and others; the metric poems by Frost and the free-verse poems by Williams in the American vernacular; the formal and typographic experiments of cummings; the poetic naturalism of Jeffers; and the assimilation to their own distinctive uses by Pound and Eliot of the forms and procedures of French symbolism, merged with the intellectual and figurative methods of the English metaphysical poets. Among the major writers of prose fiction were Edith Wharton, Sinclair Lewis, Ellen Glasgow, Willa Cather, Gertrude Stein, Sherwood Anderson, John Dos Passos, F. Scott Fitzgerald, William Faulkner, Ernest Hemingway, Thomas Wolfe, and John Steinbeck. America produced in this period its first great dramatist in Eugene O’Neill, as well as a group of distinguished literary critics that included Van Wyck Brooks, Malcolm Cowley, T. S. Eliot, Edmund Wilson, and the irreverent and caustic H. L. Mencken.

The literary productions of this era are often subclassified in a variety of ways. The flamboyant and pleasure-seeking 1920s are sometimes referred to as “**The Jazz Age**,” a title popularized by F. Scott Fitzgerald’s *Tales of the Jazz Age* (1922). The same decade was also the period of the Harlem Renaissance. The 1930s, with most of the world mired in a great depression, saw the rise of literary radicalism in the U.S.

The Harlem Renaissance (1917-1920s)

A period of remarkable creativity in literature, music, dance, painting, and sculpture by African-Americans, from the end of WWI in 1917 through the 1920s. In the course of the mass migrations to the urban North in order to escape the legal segregation of the American South—and also in order to take advantage of the jobs opened to African-Americans at the beginning of the War—the population of the region of Manhattan known as Harlem became almost exclusively black, and developed into the vital center of African-American culture in America. Distinguished writers who were part of the movement included the poets Countee Cullen, Langston Hughes (who also wrote novels and plays), Claude McKay, and Sterling Brown; the novelists Jean Toomer (whose inventive *Cane*, 1923, included verse and drama as well as prose fiction), Jessie Fauset, and Wallace Thurman; and many essayists, memoirists, and writers in diverse modes such as James Weldon Johnson, Marcus Garvey, and Arna Bontemps.

The Great Depression of 1929 and the early 1930s brought the period of buoyant Harlem culture—which had been fostered by prosperity in the publishing industry and the art world—effectively to an end. Zora Neale Hurston’s novel *Their Eyes Were*

Watching God (1937), and her other works, however, are widely accounted as late products of the Harlem Renaissance.

The Lost Generation

Many prominent American writers of the decade following the end of World War I, disillusioned by their war experiences and alienated by what they perceived as the crassness of American culture and its “puritanical” repressions, are often tagged as “The Lost Generation.”

Gertrude Stein used the phrase in conversation with Ernest Hemingway, supposedly quoting a garage mechanic saying to her, “You are all a lost generation.” The phrase signifies a disillusioned postwar generation characterized by lost values, lost belief in the idea of human progress, and a mood of futility and despair leading to hedonism. The mood is described by F. Scott Fitzgerald in *This Side of Paradise* (1920) when he writes of a generation that found “all Gods dead, all wars fought, all faiths in man shaken.”

A number of these writers became expatriates, moving either to London or to Paris in their quest for a richer literary and artistic milieu and a freer way of life. Ezra Pound, Gertrude Stein, and T. S. Eliot lived out their lives abroad, but most of the younger “exiles,” as Malcolm Cowley called them (*Exile’s Return*, 1934), came back to America in the 1930s. Hemingway’s *The Sun Also Rises* and Fitzgerald’s *Tender Is the Night* are novels that represent the mood and way of life of two groups of American expatriates. Hemingway used the phrase “You are all a lost generation” as the epigraph to his first novel, *The Sun Also Rises* (1926).

In “**The Radical ‘30s**,” the period of the Great Depression and of the economic and social reforms in the New Deal inaugurated by President Franklin Delano Roosevelt, some authors joined radical political movements, and many others dealt in their literary works with pressing social issues of the time—including, in the novel, William Faulkner, John Dos Passos, James T. Farrell, Thomas Wolfe, and John Steinbeck, and in the drama, Eugene O’Neill, Clifford Odets, and Maxwell Anderson.

TEXTS	CONTEXTS
<p>1910 Edwin Arlington Robinson, “Miniver Cheevy”</p> <p>1914 Robert Frost, “Home Burial.” Carl Sandburg, “Chicago”</p> <p>1915 Edgar Lee Masters, <i>Spoon River Anthology</i>. Ezra Pound begins <i>Cantos</i></p> <p>1916 Susan Glaspell, <i>Triffles</i></p> <p>1918 Willa Cather, <i>My Ántonia</i></p> <p>1919 Sherwood Anderson, <i>Winesburg, Ohio</i>. Amy Lowell, “Madonna of the Evening Flowers”</p> <p>1920 Pound, “Hugh Selwyn Mauberley.” Edith Wharton, <i>The Age of Innocence</i>. Edwin Arlington Robinson, “Mr. Flood’s Party”</p> <p>1921 Claude McKay, “Africa, America.” Marianne Moore, “Poetry.” Langston Hughes, “The Negro Speaks of Rivers”</p>	<p>1914–18 World War I</p> <p>1915 Great Migration of African Americans from the rural South to northern industrial cities</p> <p>1917 U.S. declares war on Germany. Revolution in Russia brings Communist party to power</p> <p>1918 Daylight Savings Time instituted to allow more daylight for war production</p> <p>1919 Senate limits U.S. participation in League of Nations; does not ratify Versailles Treaty to end World War I</p> <p>1920 18th Amendment prohibits the manufacture, sale, and transportation of alcoholic beverages. 19th Amendment gives women the vote</p> <p>1920–27 Sacco-Vanzetti trial</p>
<p>1922 T. S. Eliot, <i>The Waste Land</i>. Mina Loy, “Brancusi’s Golden Bird”</p> <p>1923 Wallace Stevens, “Sunday Morning.” Jean Toomer, <i>Cane</i></p>	<p>1922 Fascism rises in Europe; Mussolini becomes dictator of Italy</p>

TEXTS	CONTEXTS
<p>1924 H.D. (Hilda Doolittle), "Helen"</p> <p>1925 F. Scott Fitzgerald, <i>The Great Gatsby</i>. Gertrude Stein, <i>The Making of Americans</i>. Theodore Dreiser, <i>An American Tragedy</i>. Alain Locke publishes <i>The New Negro</i>, leading anthology of the Harlem Renaissance</p> <p>1926 Ernest Hemingway, <i>The Sun Also Rises</i>. Hart Crane, <i>The Bridge</i></p> <p>1927 Zora Neale Hurston, "The Eatonville Anthology"</p> <p>1928 Nella Larsen, <i>Quicksand</i></p> <p>1929 William Faulkner, <i>The Sound and the Fury</i></p> <p>1930 Katherine Anne Porter, "Flowering Judas"</p> <p>1931 E. E. Cummings, "i sing of Olaf glad and big." F. Scott Fitzgerald, "Babylon Revisited"</p> <p>1932 Black Elk and John G. Neihardt, <i>Black Elk Speaks</i>. Sterling A. Brown, "He Was a Man"</p> <p>1934 William Carlos Williams, "This Is Just to Say"</p> <p>1936 Hemingway, "The Snows of Kilimanjaro"</p> <p>1937 Thomas Wolfe, "The Lost Boy." Pietro di Donato, "Christ in Concrete"</p> <p>1938 John Dos Passos, <i>U.S.A.</i>. Faulkner, "Barn Burning"</p> <p>1939 John Steinbeck, <i>The Grapes of Wrath</i>. Richard Wright, "The Man Who Was Almost a Man"</p>	<p>1924 Exclusionary immigration act bars Asians from the U.S.</p> <p>1927 <i>The Jazz Singer</i>, first full-length "talkie," is released</p> <p>1929 Stock market crashes; Great Depression begins</p> <p>1930 Sinclair Lewis is first American to win Nobel Prize for literature</p> <p>1931 Scottsboro trial</p> <p>1932 Franklin Delano Roosevelt's "New Deal" introduces social security, welfare, and unemployment insurance</p> <p>1933 Adolf Hitler's Nationalist Socialist (Nazi) party comes to power in Germany. 18th Amendment repealed</p> <p>1934 Wheeler-Howard (Indian Reorganization) Act passed, ending Dawes era</p> <p>1936 Hitler begins armed occupation of Europe. Eugene O'Neill wins Nobel Prize for literature.</p> <p>1936-39 Spanish Civil War: U.S. volunteers among those fighting against General Franco, who becomes dictator of Spain</p> <p>1937 Stalin's purges</p> <p>1939-45 World War II. The Holocaust</p>

THE CONTEMPORARY PERIOD (1939-present)

World War II, and especially the disillusionment with Soviet Communism consequent upon the Moscow trials for alleged treason and Stalin's signing of the Russo-German pact with Hitler in 1939, largely ended the literary radicalism of the 1930s. The final blow to the very few writers who had maintained intellectual allegiance to Soviet Russia did not come until 1991, with the collapse of Russian Communism and the dissolution of the Soviet Union. For several decades the New Criticism—dominated by conservative southern writers, the Agrarians, who in the 1930s had championed a return from an industrial to an agricultural economy—typified the prevailing critical tendency to isolate literature from the life of the author and from society and to conceive a work of literature, in formal terms, as an organic and autonomous entity. The eminent and influential critics Edmund Wilson and Lionel Trilling, however—as well as other critics grouped with them as the New York Intellectuals, including Philip Rahv, Alfred Kazin, and Irving Howe—continued through the 1960s to deal with a work of literature humanistically and historically, in the context of its author's life, temperament, and social milieu, and in terms of the work's moral and imaginative qualities and its consequences for society.

The 1950s, while often regarded in retrospect as a period of cultural conformity and complacency, was marked by the emergence of vigorous antiestablishment and anti-traditional literary movements: the Beat writers such as Allen Ginsberg and Jack Kerouac; the American exemplars of the literature of the absurd; the Black Mountain Poets, Charles Olson, Robert Creeley, and Robert Duncan; and the New York Poets, Frank O'Hara, Kenneth Koch, and John Ashbery. It was also a time of confessional poetry and the literature of extreme sexual candor, marked by the emergence of Henry Miller as a notable author (his autobiographical and fictional works, begun in the 1930s, had earlier been available only under the counter) and the writings of Norman Mailer, William Burroughs, and Vladimir Nabokov (*Lolita* was published in 1955). The counterculture of the 1960s and early 1970s continued some of these modes, but in a fashion made extreme and fevered by the rebellious youth movement and the vehement and sometimes violent opposition to the war in Vietnam.

The Beat Generation

This literary group flourished from the mid-1950s until the early 1960s. Its most prominent members were the novelists John Clellon Holmes and Jack Kerouac, and the poets Allen Ginsberg, Lawrence Ferlinghetti, Philip Whalen, Gary Snyder, and Gregory Corso. William Burroughs was loosely associated with the group, which was mainly located in San Francisco and in Greenwich Village, New York City. Much Beat poetry was published by Ferlinghetti's "City Lights" imprint, and his "City Lights" bookstore in San Francisco was an important meeting-place for the group.

Holmes introduced the term "Beat generation" in a 1952 essay on his novel *Go* (1952), and later Kerouac suggested that "Beat" meant being socially marginalized and exhausted ("beaten down") and blessed ("beatific"). There are also musical connotations to the name as many members were jazz enthusiasts. Socially the Beats, many of whom were gay or bisexual, extolled individual freedom and attacked what they saw as the materialism, militarism, consumerism, and conformity of the 1950s. To this end they affected nonconformist styles of dress and speech and, avowedly antimaterialist, they cultivated mystical experiences by the use of drugs or by meditation (many members developed an interest in forms of mysticism and in Zen Buddhism). The Beats were

politically radical, and to some degree their anti-authoritarian attitudes were taken up by activists in the 1960s. In their writing they encouraged direct and frank communication and, rejecting the formalist, impersonal writing encouraged by the New Criticism, they cultivated styles that gave the impression of spontaneity and improvisation. Much Beat poetry was performance orientated (often read in public with jazz accompaniment). Although they have been much parodied and satirized, the Beats brought fresh energies to American writing and their influence has been significant.

Important American writers after World War II include, in prose fiction, Vladimir Nabokov (who emigrated to America in 1940), Eudora Welty, Robert Penn Warren, Bernard Malamud, James Gould Cozzens, Saul Bellow, Mary McCarthy, Norman Mailer, John Updike, Kurt Vonnegut, Jr., Thomas Pynchon, John Barth, Donald Barthelme, E. L. Doctorow, and Cynthia Ozick; in poetry, Marianne Moore, Robert Penn Warren, Theodore Roethke, Elizabeth Bishop, Richard Wilbur, Robert Lowell, Allen Ginsberg, Adrienne Rich, Sylvia Plath, A. R. Ammons, and John Ashbery; and in drama, Thornton Wilder, Lillian Hellman, Arthur Miller, Tennessee Williams, Edward Albee, and a number of more recent playwrights, including Sam Shepard, David Mamet, Tony Kushner, and Wendy Wasserstein.

Many of the most innovative and distinguished literary works of the later decades of the 20th century have been written by writers who are often identified as belonging to one or another “minority,” or ethnic literary group. (An “ethnic group” consists of individuals who are distinguishable, within a majority cultural and social system, by shared characteristics such as race, religion, language, cultural modes, and national origin.) There is, however, much contention, both within and outside these groups, whether it is more just and enlightening to consider such writers simply as part of the American mainstream or to stress what is called “the identity” of each writer as a participant in an ethnic culture with its distinctive subject matter, themes, and formal features. This is the era of the notable African-American novelists and essayists Ralph Ellison, James Baldwin, Richard Wright, Albert Murray, Gloria Naylor, Alice Walker, and Toni Morrison; the poets Amiri Baraka (LeRoi Jones), Gwendolyn Brooks, Maya Angelou, and Rita Dove; and the dramatists Lorraine Hansberry and August Wilson. (For some developments in popular modes of versification, see performance poetry.) It is also the era of the emergence of such prominent minority novelists as Leslie Marmon Silko (Native American); Oscar Hijuelos and Sandra Cisneros (Hispanic); and Maxine Hong Kingston and Amy Tan (Chinese-American).

The contemporary literary scene in America is crowded and varied, and the list below could readily be expanded. We must await the passage of time to determine which writers now active will emerge as enduringly major figures in the canon of American literature.

TEXTS	CONTEXTS
<p>1940 Eugene O'Neill, <i>Long Day's Journey into Night</i></p> <p>1941 Eudora Welty, "Petrified Man"</p> <p>1942 Wallace Stevens, "Of Modern Poetry"</p> <p>1944 H.D. (Hilda Doolittle), <i>The Walls Do Not Fall</i>. Marianne Moore, "In Distrust of Merits," Stanley Kunitz, "Father and Son"</p> <p>1945 Randall Jarrell, "The Death of the Ball Turret Gunner"</p> <p>1947 Tennessee Williams, <i>A Streetcar Named Desire</i></p> <p>1948 Theodore Roethke, <i>The Lost Son</i></p> <p>1949 Arthur Miller, <i>Death of a Salesman</i></p> <p>1950 Richard Wilbur, "A World without Objects Is a Sensible Emptiness." Charles Olson, "Projective Verse"</p> <p>1952 Ralph Ellison, <i>Invisible Man</i></p> <p>1953 Saul Bellow, <i>The Adventures of Augie March</i>. Charles Olson, "Maximus, to Himself"</p> <p>1955 Flannery O'Connor, "Good Country People"</p> <p>1955-68 John Berryman composes <i>The Dream Songs</i> (pub. 1964, 1968, 1977)</p> <p>1956 Allen Ginsberg, <i>Howl</i></p> <p>1958 Bernard Malamud, "The Magic Barrel"</p> <p>1959 Philip Roth, "Defender of the Faith." Robert Creeley, "Kore." Robert Lowell, <i>Life Studies</i>. Frank O'Hara, "Personism"</p> <p>1960 Thomas Pynchon, "Entropy." Gwendolyn Brooks, "We Real Cool." Robert Duncan, "Often I Am Permitted to Return to a Meadow"</p> <p>1961 Denise Levertov, "The Jacob's Ladder"</p> <p>1962 Jack Kerouac, <i>Big Sur</i>. Robert Hayden, "Middle Passage"</p> <p>1963 James Wright, "A Messing." Martin Luther King Jr., "I Have a Dream"</p> <p>1964 John Cheever, "The Swimmer." Amiri Baraka (LeRoi Jones) "An Agony. As Now." Frank O'Hara, "A Step Away from Them"</p> <p>1965 James Baldwin, "Going to Meet the Man." A. R. Ammons, "Corson's Inlet"</p> <p>1966 James Merrill, "The Broken Home." Sylvia Plath, <i>Ariel</i></p> <p>1967 Ammons, "A Poem Is a Walk." W. S. Merwin, "For a Coming Extinction"</p>	<p>1941 Japan bombs Pearl Harbor, Hawaii. U.S. enters war against Japan and its allies, Germany and Italy</p> <p>1942 President Roosevelt orders internment of Japanese Americans in camps</p> <p>1944 D Day; Allied invasion of Normandy</p> <p>1945 German forces surrender in spring; U.S. drops atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki; Japan surrenders in August. Cold War begins</p> <p>1947 Jackie Robinson becomes the first black Major League ballplayer</p> <p>1948 T. S. Eliot wins Nobel Prize for literature.</p> <p>1949 William Faulkner wins Nobel Prize for literature.</p> <p>1950 Senator Joseph McCarthy begins attacks on communism</p> <p>1950-53 Korean War</p> <p>1953 House Concurrent Resolution 108 dictates government's intention to "terminate" its treaty relations with the Native American tribes</p> <p>1954 Brown v. Board of Education declares segregated schools unconstitutional. Beat Generation poets begin to gather at San Francisco's City Lights Bookshop</p> <p>1956 Martin Luther King Jr. leads bus boycott in Montgomery, Alabama</p> <p>1959 Fidel Castro becomes communist leader of Cuba</p> <p>1960 Woolworth lunch counter sit-in in Greensboro, N.C., marks beginning of Civil Rights Movement</p> <p>1962 U.S. and Soviet Union close to war over Russian missiles based in Cuba; missiles withdrawn. John Steinbeck wins Nobel Prize for literature.</p> <p>1963 King delivers "I Have a Dream" speech. Black church in Birmingham, Alabama, bombed, killing four girls. President John F. Kennedy assassinated</p> <p>1965 Riots break out in Watts section of Los Angeles. Malcolm X assassinated. Hippie culture flourishes in San Francisco</p> <p>1965-73 Vietnam War</p> <p>1966 National Organization for Women (NOW) founded. Hayden and Brooks criticized at Black Writers' Conference, Fisk University, for composing "academic" poetry</p>
<p>1968 Donald Barthelme, "The Balloon." Edward Abbey, "Havasu"</p> <p>1969 N. Scott Momaday, <i>The Way to Rainy Mountain</i>. Kurt Vonnegut, <i>Slaughterhouse-Five</i>. Galway Kinnell. "The Porcupine." Robert Penn Warren, <i>Audubon</i></p>	<p>1968 King assassinated. Senator Robert F. Kennedy assassinated. Photo of Earthrise by Apollo 8</p> <p>1969 U.S. astronauts land on the moon. Stonewall riots in New York City initiate gay liberation movement. Woodstock Festival held near Bethel, New York</p>

TEXTS	CONTEXTS
<p>1970 Toni Morrison, <i>The Bluest Eye</i>. Ishmael Reed, “Neo-Hoodoo Manifesto”</p> <p>1971 Audre Lorde, “Black Mother Woman”</p> <p>1972 Rudolfo A. Anaya, <i>Bless Me, Ultima</i>. Anne Sexton, <i>The Death of the Fathers</i>. Letter from Elizabeth Bishop to Robert Lowell objecting to use of personal letters in manuscript of <i>The Dolphin</i></p> <p>1973 Alice Walker, “Everyday Use.” Adrienne Rich, <i>Diving into the Wreck</i></p> <p>1974 Grace Paley, “A Conversation with My Father.” Annie Dillard, <i>Pilgrim at Tinker Creek</i></p> <p>1975 John Updike, “Separating.” John Ashbery, “Self-Portrait in a Convex Mirror.” Michael S. Harper, “Nightmare Begins Responsibility”</p> <p>1976 Elizabeth Bishop, <i>Geography III</i>. Maxine Hong Kingston, “No Name Woman.” Barry Lopez, “The Raven”</p> <p>1977 Audre Lorde, “Poetry Is Not a Luxury”</p> <p>1978 Ann Beattie, “Weekend.” Jamaica Kinkaid, “0”</p> <p>1979 Philip Levine, “Starlight.” Mary Oliver, “The Black Snake.” Robert Hass “Meditation at Lagunitas”</p> <p>1980 Toni Cade Bambara, “Medley.” Sam Shepard, <i>True West</i></p> <p>1981 Leslie Marmon Silko, “Lullaby.” Lorna Dee Cervantes, “The Body as Braille.” James Dickey, “Falling.” Simon J. Ortiz, “From Sand Creek”</p> <p>1982 Alice Walker, <i>The Color Purple</i>. Raymond Carver, “Cathedral.” David Mamet, <i>Glengarry Glen Ross</i></p> <p>1983 Morrison, “Recitatif.” Joy Harjo, “Call It Fear”</p> <p>1984 Louise Erdrich, “Dear John Wayne”</p> <p>1985 Ursula K. Le Guin, “She Unnames Them.” Stanley Kunitz, “The Wellfleet Whale”</p> <p>1986 Erdrich, “Fleur.” Art Spiegelman, <i>Maus I</i>. Rita Dove, <i>Thomas and Beulah</i>. Li-Young Lee, “Eating Together”</p> <p>1987 Morrison, <i>Beloved</i>. Gloria Anzaldúa, <i>Borderlands/La Frontera</i>. Sharon Olds, “I Go Back to May 1937”</p> <p>1988 Yusef Komunyakaa, “Facing It”</p> <p>1989 Amy Tan, <i>The Joy Luck Club</i></p> <p>1990 Robert Pinsky, “The Want Bone”</p> <p>1991 Sandra Cisneros, <i>Woman Hollering Creek</i></p> <p>1993 Gary Snyder, “Ripples on the Surface.” Ammons, <i>Garbage</i>. Sherman Alexie, “This Is What It Means to Say Phoenix, Arizona”</p> <p>1994 Cathy Song, “Lost Sister.” Stephen Dixon, “Flying”</p> <p>1995 Jorie Graham, <i>The Dream of the Unified Field</i></p> <p>1996 Merwin, “Lament for the Makers.” Alexie, “The Exaggeration of Despair.” Junot Diaz, “Drown”</p>	<p>1970 National Guard kills four students during antiwar demonstration at Kent State University, Ohio</p> <p>1972 Watergate Scandal. Military draft ends</p> <p>1973 Roe v. Wade legalizes abortion. American Indian Movement members occupy Wounded Knee, South Dakota</p> <p>1974 President Richard Nixon resigns in wake of Watergate, avoiding impeachment</p> <p>1976 U.S. bicentennial. Saul Bellow wins Nobel Prize for literature.</p> <p>1982 Equal Rights Amendment defeated. Antinuclear movement protests manufacture of nuclear weapons. AIDS officially identified in the U.S.</p> <p>1989 Soviet Union collapses; Cold War ends. Oil tanker Exxon Valdez runs aground in Alaska</p> <p>1990 Congress passes Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act</p> <p>1991 U.S. enters Persian Gulf War. World Wide Web introduced</p> <p>1992 U.S. and Russia announce formal end to the Cold War.</p> <p>1993 Toni Morrison wins Nobel Prize for literature.</p> <p>1995 Federal building in Oklahoma City bombed in a terrorist attack</p>
<p>1997 Julia Alvarez, <i>Yo!</i>. Fanny Howe, “[Nobody wants crossed out girls around]”</p> <p>1998 Billy Collins, “I Chop Some Parsley While Listening to Art Blakey’s Version of ‘Three Blind Mice’”</p> <p>1999 Jhumpa Lahiri, “Sexy.” Charles Simic, “Arriving Celebrities”</p> <p>2000 Charles Wright, “North American Bear.” Lucille Clifton, “Moonchild”</p>	<p>1997 Pathfinder robot explores Mars</p>

TEXTS	CONTEXTS
<p>2001 Simic, "Late September"</p> <p>2002 Dorothy Allison, "Stubborn Girls and Mean Stories." Alberto Rios, "Refugio's Hair"</p> <p>2004 Louise Glück, "October"</p> <p>2005 Kay Ryan, "Home to Roost." Joan Didion, <i>The Year of Magical Thinking</i></p> <p>2006 Thomas McGuane, "Gallatin Canyon." Richard Powers, <i>The Echo Maker</i>. John Crawford, "The Last True Story I'll Ever Tell"</p> <p>2007 Edwidge Danticat, <i>Brother, I'm Dying</i></p>	<p>2001 Execution of Timothy McVeigh, convicted of 1995 Oklahoma City bombing. September 11 terrorist attacks on Pentagon and World Trade Center</p> <p>2003 U.S. and Great Britain invade Iraq</p> <p>2007 Advent of worst economic recession since the Great Depression.</p> <p>2009 Inauguration of Barack Obama as U.S. President</p> <p>2010 Massive oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico</p> <p>2011 Death of terrorist leader Osama bin Laden, architect of 9/11 attacks</p>

Stolen From:

- Abrams, Meyer H, and Geoffrey G. Harpham. *A Glossary of Literary Terms*. 9th ed. Wadsworth Cengage Learning, 2009.
- Baker, Houston A. *Black Literature in America*. McGraw-Hill, 1971.
- . *Three American Literatures: Essays in Chicano, Native American, and Asian-American Literature for Teachers of American Literature*. Modern Language Association of America, 1982.
- Bell, Bernard W. *The Afro-American Novel and Its Tradition*. U of Massachusetts P, 1989.
- Bennett, H. S. *Chaucer and the Fifteenth Century*. Clarendon Press, 1965.
- Bush, Douglas. *English Literature in the Earlier Seventeenth Century, 1600-1660*. 2nd ed., rev. Clarendon Press, 1962.
- Dickstein, Morris. *Gates of Eden: American Culture in the Sixties*. Basic Books, 1977.
- Eagleton, Terry. *Exiles and Émigrés: Studies in Modern Literature*. Schocken Books, 1970.
- Frye, Northrop. *Fables of Identity: Studies in Poetic Mythology*. Harcourt, Brace & World, 1963.
- Frye, Northrop, ed. *Romanticism Reconsidered: Selected Papers from the English Institute*. Columbia UP, 1963.
- Gannon, Tom. "William Wordsworth: Frequently Asked Questions." 31 December, 1999. incolor.inebraska.com/tgannon/txts/wordsfaq.txt.
- Gates, Henry L. *Figures in Black: Words, Signs, and the "Racial" Self*. Oxford UP, 1987.
- Gates, Henry L, and Sunday O. Anozie, editors. *Black Literature and Literary Theory*. Methuen, 1984.
- Gates, Henry L, and Nellie Y. McKay, editors. *The Norton Anthology of African American Literature*. W.W. Norton & Co, 1996.
- Greenfield, Stanley B. *A Critical History of Old English Literature*. New York UP, 1965.
- Hilles, Frederick W., and Harold Bloom, editors. *From Sensibility to Romanticism: Essays Presented to Frederick A. Pottle*. Oxford UP, 1965.
- Leitch, Vincent B. *American Literary Criticism from the Thirties to the Eighties*. Columbia UP, 1988.
- Redding, Jay S. *To Make a Poet Black*. U of North Carolina P, 1939.
- Renwick, W. L., and Harold Orton. *The Beginnings of English Literature to Skelton, 1509*. 2nd rev. ed. Dover Publications, 1952.
- Roszak, Theodore. *The Making of a Counter Culture: Reflections on the Technocratic Society and Its Youthful Opposition*. Doubleday, 1969.
- Skelton, Robin. *Cavalier Poets*. Published for the British Council by Longmans, Green, 1960.
- Stewart, John L. *The Burden of Time: The Fugitives and Agrarians*. Princeton UP, 1966.
- "Timeline." *American Masters: The American Novel*. PBS Online. March 2007.
- "Timeline." *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*. 9th ed. Vols. A-F. Stephen Greenblatt, General editor, Norton, 2011.
- "Timeline." *The Norton Anthology of American Literature*. 8th ed. Vols. A-F. Nina Baym, General editor, Norton, 2011.
- Vasta, Edward. *Middle English Survey: Critical Essays*. U of Notre Dame P, 1965.
- Wedgwood, C. V. *Seventeenth-Century English Literature*. Oxford UP, 1950.
- Wheeler, L. Kip. "Periods of Literary History." Carson-Newman College. 5 November, 2014. web.cn.edu/kwheeler/documents/Periods_Lit_History.pdf.
- Wiley, Basil. *The Seventeenth Century Background: Studies in the Thought of the Age in Relation to Poetry and Religion*. Chatto, 1949.
- Wrenn, C. L. *A Study of Old English Literature*. Harrap, 1967