

British Literary Periods

Anglo Saxon Period (449-1066)

- ❑ A conquest philosophy/warrior society survival/ warfare dominated
- ❑ Allegiance to a lord or leader-in return the lord provided his warriors with gifts/loot - materialistic society
- ❑ A name to carry on after he died/ fame is important/strong belief in fate
- ❑ Strong sense of revenge - "a man price" could pay for the man to not kill
- ❑ Oral literature
 - 597 - Cultural clash between Anglo Saxon and Christianity.
 - 1066- Norman Conquest - King William invades England.

Medieval Period (1066-1485)

- ❑ Moral expressed
- ❑ God is the center of all
- ❑ Primary purpose is to educate
- ❑ Humans are not important except as souls
- ❑ Clerically inspired and written
- ❑ Human body is not important
- ❑ Drama - acted out what was going on
- ❑ Earth/nature - a testing ground for soul - afterlife is of utmost importance
 - The Crusades brought about ...

(Chaucer, Malory)

Renaissance Period and 17th Century (1485-1660)

- ❑ The human becomes the major subject of literature.
- ❑ Humanism - idea of while on earth we should be humane and care about others.
- ❑ Human body began to be something of interest - "look pretty"

American Literary Periods

Puritan/Colonial Period (1620-1765)

- ❑ Plain style of writing
- ❑ Didactic
- ❑ Strong, simple language
(Bradford, Bradstreet, Rowlandson, Edwards)

British Literary Periods

- ❑ Laugh and enjoy life while still on earth/ but they still believe in heaven. Idealism of how man can enjoy life and still get to heaven.

(Christopher Marlowe, Sir Thomas Wyatt, Sir Walter Raleigh, Edmund Spenser, Sir Philip Sydney, William Shakespeare, John Donne, Ben Jonson, Robert Herrick, George Herbert, John Milton, and Andrew Marvell)

- From the Renaissance...
The Puritans
(Roundheads) took over

The Restoration (1660-1700) and the Eighteenth Century Also called Neoclassical Period/Age of Reason/Enlightenment (1660-1798)

- ❑ Used classical Greek, Latin, and Roman literature as models.
- ❑ Nature was the body of God's soul/ nature was considered to be pure
- ❑ Reason over passion / "Thinking Creatures"/ distrust of innovation or invention/ order and rules important
- ❑ "God as Clockmaker" / Strong belief in Deism - world and universe represent the clock- God got it started- reasonable solution to evil on earth is that we are responsible for our own actions
- ❑ Society is more important than the individual/ human being as part of a group/ great chain of social being
 - Romanticism was the result of a revolution against established Neoclassic literary traditions.

(Daniel Defoe, Jonathan Swift, Alexander Pope, Thomas Gray)

American Literary Periods

Revolutionary/Age of Reason Period (1765-1830)

- ❑ Emphasis on rational thought
- ❑ Elegant, ornate language
- ❑ All truths of the world and human existence could be discovered through scientific observation and the process of reasoning
- ❑ Optimistic about present and future
- ❑ Deep interest in science
- ❑ Desire to preserve cultural standards and traditions
- ❑ Belief in moderation and self-restraint

(Phyllis Wheatley, Ben Franklin, Thomas Jefferson, Thomas Paine, Crèvecoeur, William Cullen Bryant)

The Romantic Period (1830-1865)

- ❑ Emphasis on nature; all answers to be found in nature
- ❑ Importance of the individual
- ❑ Imagination versus reality
- ❑ Looseness of style
- ❑ Interest in the strange; beauty in the unusual
- ❑ Childhood innocence
- ❑ Sought to rise above dull realities by contemplation of the natural world

(Edgar Allan Poe, Washington Irving, Longfellow, Hawthorne, Cooper, Melville, Whitman)

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American Literary Periods

The Romantic Period (1798-1832)

- ❑ Favored innovation rather than tradition - respect for the life of the common man
- ❑ Literature is described as "the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings."
- ❑ External nature became a persistent subject of poetry. Nature was used not for its own sake, but as a stimulus for the poet to engage thinking. Man thinks as a result of nature's stimulus.
- ❑ Romantic poetry addressed man; the poet became the subject matter of the literature.
- ❑ Romantics viewed the individual as a being of limitless aspiration moving toward the infinite good envisioned in the poet's imagination.

(Mary Shelley, Jane Austen, Robert Burns, William Blake, William Wordsworth, Samuel T. Coleridge, Lord Byron, Percy Shelley, and John Keats)

Victorian Period (1832-1901)

- ❑ Society and economics take precedence
- ❑ Rules become more important
- ❑ Industrial revolution at its peak/social problems arise from the new industrial conditions
- ❑ Passions must be controlled/manners and morals extremely important
- ❑ Pride in the growing power of England
- ❑ Optimism, doubts, and hopes about the new science
- ❑ Rise of the middle class

(Alfred, Lord Tennyson, Robert Browning, Elizabeth Barrett Browning, Thomas Hardy, A. E. Houseman, Rossetti, Kipling, Oscar Wilde, Emily Bronte, Charlotte Bronte, George Bernard Shaw, Charles Dickens, and Joseph Conrad)

The Realistic Period (1865-1915)

- ❑ Found meaning in the commonplace
- ❑ Stressed the actual as opposed to the imagined or fanciful
- ❑ Tried to write truthfully and objectively about ordinary characters in ordinary circumstances
- ❑ Rejected heroic adventures and unusual or unfamiliar subjects

(William Dean Howells, Mark Twain, Ambrose Bierce, Willa Cather)

Offshoots of Realism

Naturalism

- ❑ Viewed as the inescapable working out of natural forces

British Literary Periods

Modern Period (1914-1965)

- ❑ Existentialism/ existential loneliness/total alienation of individual
- ❑ Individual responsible for self and own acts
- ❑ See inside character's mind/ see characters as individuals
- ❑ Writing bits and pieces/ shows the world of chaos after war
- ❑ Isolated individuals/ a sense of loss and despair
- ❑ Break with traditional values
- ❑ Places individuals and inner self above society.

(James Joyce, Virginia Woolf, D. H. Lawrence, Hopkins, Yeats, Auden, Spender, Smith, Eliot, Samuel Beckett, Tom Stoppard, and Peter Shaffer)

American Literary Periods

- ❑ One's destiny decided by heredity and environment, physical drives, and economic circumstances
- ❑ Tended to be pessimistic

Regionalism

- ❑ Local color movement
- ❑ Use of regional dialect and descriptions of the landscape
- ❑ Sought to capture the essence of life in various regions of growing nation

(Bret Harte (father of Regionalism), Sarah Orne Jewett, Kate Chopin, Mark Twain)

Modern Period (1915-1945)

- ❑ Break with tradition
- ❑ Historical discontinuity
- ❑ Sense of alienation, loss, despair-major themes
- ❑ Rejects not only history, but also society which has created this history
- ❑ Rejects traditional values and rhetoric by which they were communicated
- ❑ Elevates the individual and the inward over the social and the outward
- ❑ Prefers sub-conscious to self-conscious
- ❑ Of the elements of the American Dream, only the importance of the individual remains
- ❑ Bare-bones writing, less concerned with plot than theme
- ❑ Fragmentation (omitted exposition, transitions, resolutions, and explanations) to reflect fragmentation of modern world
- ❑ Stream of consciousness

(John Steinbeck, Ernest Hemingway, F. Scott Fitzgerald, Sherwood Anderson, Sinclair Lewis, Eugene O'Neil, Robert Frost, T. S. Eliot, Ezra Pound, H. D. , Amy Lowell, Langston Hughes, Countee Cullen, and Zora Neale Hurston)

British Literary Periods

Postmodern/ Contemporary Period (1965- Present)

- ❑ Fragmented world/ no order to the world
- ❑ Actively avoids putting things in order
- ❑ Relies on individual/ can make or break self
- ❑ Cannot be put into traditional groups
- ❑ Anything goes/experiment/diversity is the key
- ❑ The fundamental philosophical assumptions of Modernism continue into the Postmodern Period

(Chinua Achebe, Doris Lessing, Margaret Atwood, Ted Hughes, Auden, Peter Shaffer)

American Literary Periods

Postmodern/ Contemporary Period (1946- Present)

- ❑ Building upon modernism, with exploration of new works, new literary forms and techniques, blend of fiction and non-fiction
- ❑ Themes concern the complex, impersonal, and commercial nature of today's world.

(Saul Bellow, Carson McCullers, Robert Penn Warren, Bernard Malamud, John Updike, Flannery O'Connor, Joyce Carol Oates, Anne Tyler, Alice Walker, Gwendolyn Brooke, Theodore Roethke, Robert Pinsky, Rita Dove)