

# The English Literature Timeline

## The Classical Period

1200-455 BCE



### I. HOMERIC or HEROIC PERIOD (1200-800 BCE)

Greek legends were 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.



### II. CLASSICAL GREEK PERIOD (800-200 BCE)

Greek writers, playwrights, and philosophers include 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 was the sophisticated era of the polis, or individual City-State, and early democracy. Some of the world's finest art, poetry, drama, architecture, and philosophy originated in Athens.



### III. CLASSICAL ROMAN PERIOD (200 BCE-455 CE)

After nearly 500 years as a Republic, Rome slid into a 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.

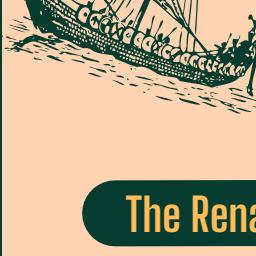


### IV. PATRISTIC PERIOD (c. 70 CE-455 CE)

Early Christian writers include Saint Augustine, Tertullian, Saint Cyprian, Saint Ambrose and Saint Jerome. This is the period when Saint Jerome first compiled the Bible, Christianity spread across Europe, and the Roman Empire suffered its dying convulsions.

## I. THE OLD ENGLISH (ANGLO-SAXON) PERIOD (428-1066 CE)

455 CE-1485 CE



The so-called "Dark Ages" occurred after Rome fell and barbarian tribes moved into Europe.

Franks, Ostrogoths, Lombards, and Goths settled in the ruins of Europe, and the Angles, Saxons, and Jutes migrated to Britain displacing native Celts into Scotland, Ireland, and Wales. Early Old English poems such as Beowulf, The Wanderer, and The Seafarer originated sometime late in the Anglo-Saxon period.

## The Medieval Period

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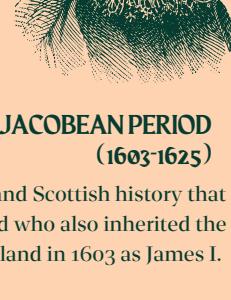
### II. THE MIDDLE ENGLISH PERIOD (c. 1066-1450 CE)



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.

## I. EARLY TUDOR PERIOD (1485-1558)

1485-1660 CE



The War of the Roses ended 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 created the first Protestant church in England. Edmund Spenser is a sample poet.

### III. JACOBEAN PERIOD (1603-1625)

The Jacobean Era was the period in English and Scottish history that coincides with the reign of James VI of Scotland who also inherited the crown of England in 1603 as James I.

### II. THE AUGUSTAN AGE (1700-1750)

1660-1790 CE

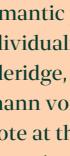


This period is marked by the imitation of Virgil and Horace's literature in English letters. The principal English writers include Addison, Steele, Swift, and Alexander Pope.

Abroad, Voltaire was the dominant French writer.

### III. THE AGE OF JOHNSON (1750-1790)

This period marks the transition toward the upcoming Romanticism though the period is still largely Neoclassical. Major writers include Dr. Samuel Johnson, Boswell, and Edward Gibbon who represent the Neoclassical tendencies.



## The Enlightenment Period

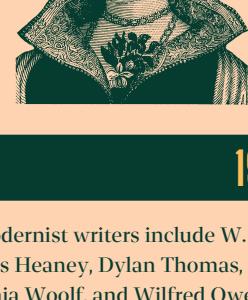
## The Enlightenment Period

### I. RESTORATION PERIOD (1660-1700)

This period marks the British king's restoration to the throne after a long period of Puritan domination in England. Its symptoms include the dominance of French and Classical influences on poetry and drama. Sample writers include John Dryden, John Locke, Sir William Temple, and Samuel Pepys, and Aphra Behn in England. Abroad, representative authors include Jean Racine and Molière.



Romantic poets wrote about nature, imagination, and individuality in England. Some Romantics include Coleridge, Blake, Keats, and Shelley in Britain and Johann von Goethe in Germany. Jane Austen also wrote at this time, though she is typically not categorized with the male Romantic poets.



## The Modern Period

1790-1830 CE



In Britain, modernist writers include W. B. Yeats, Seamus Heaney, Dylan Thomas, W. H. Auden, Virginia Woolf, and Wilfred Owen.

In America, the modernist period includes Robert Frost and Flannery O'Connor as well as the famous writers of The Lost Generation (also called the writers of The Jazz Age, 1914-1929) such as Hemingway, Stein, Fitzgerald, and Faulkner.

1832-1901 CE

## The Victorian Period

Writings from the period of Queen Victoria's reign include sentimental novels. British writers include Elizabeth Browning, Alfred Lord Tennyson, Matthew Arnold, Robert Browning, Charles Dickens, and the Brontë sisters. Pre-Raphaelites, like the Rossetti siblings and William Morris, idealize and long for the morality of the medieval world.



1914-1945 CE

## The Postmodern Period

T. S. Eliot, Morrison, Shaw, Beckett, Stoppard, Fowles, Calvino, Ginsberg, Pynchon, and other modern writers, poets, and playwrights experimented with metafiction and fragmented poetry. Multiculturalism led to an increasing canonization of non-Caucasian writers such as Langston Hughes, Sandra Cisneros, and Zora Neal Hurston.