**Victorian literature**   
Victorian literature is that produced during the reign of Queen Victoria (1837-1901) or the Victorian era. It forms a link and transition between the writers of the romantic period and the very different literature of the 20th century. The 19th century is often regarded as a high point in British literature as well as in other countries such as France, the United States and Russia. Books, and novels in particular, became ubiquitous, and the "Victorian novelist" created a legacy of works with continuing appeal. Many novels were published in serial form, along with short stories and poetry, in such literary magazines as *Household Words*.  
The Novel: The 19th century saw the novel become the leading form of literature in English. The works by pre-Victorian writers such as [Jane Austen](https://ebooks.adelaide.edu.au/a/austen/jane/) and [Walter Scott](https://ebooks.adelaide.edu.au/s/scott/walter/) had perfected both closely-observed social satire and adventure stories. Victorian novels tend to be idealized portraits of difficult lives in which hard work, perseverance, love and luck win out in the end; virtue would be rewarded and wrongdoers are suitably punished.  
Children's literature**:** The Victorians are sometimes credited with 'inventing childhood', partly via their efforts to stop child labour and the introduction of compulsory education. As children began to be able to read, literature for young people became a growth industry, with not only established writers producing works for children (such as Dickens' *A Child's History of England*) but also a new group of dedicated children's authors. Writers like [Lewis Carroll](https://ebooks.adelaide.edu.au/c/carroll/lewis/), [R. M. Ballantyne](https://ebooks.adelaide.edu.au/b/ballantyne/rm) and Anna Sewell wrote mainly for children.  
Poetry: After the upheavals of the romantic period, Poetry became somewhat institutionalised in the Victorian era; [Alfred Tennyson](https://ebooks.adelaide.edu.au/t/tennyson/alfred/) held the poet laureateship for over forty years. Some poetry, highly regarded at the time, such as Invictus, is now seen as jingoistic and bombastic but poetry could also be a powerful voice of criticism, as with Tennyson's Charge of the Light Brigade, a fierce attack on a military blunder**.**Drama:In drama, farces, musical burlesques, extravaganzas and comic operas competed with Shakespeare productions and serious drama by the likes of James Planché and Thomas William Robertson. In 1855, the German Reed Entertainments began a process of elevating the level of (formerly risqué) musical theatre in Britain that culminated in the famous series of comic operas by Gilbert and Sullivan and were followed by the 1890s with the first Edwardian musical comedies. The first play to achieve 500 consecutive performances was the London comedy Our Boys by H. J. Byron, opening in 1875. Its astonishing new record of 1,362 performances was bested in 1892 by Charley's Aunt by Brandon Thomas.  
After W. S. Gilbert, Oscar Wilde became the leading poet and dramatist of the late Victorian period. Wilde's plays, in particular, stand apart from the many now forgotten plays of Victorian times and have a much closer relationship to those of the Edwardian dramatists such as George Bernard Shaw  
WorksSignificant Victorian novelists and poets include:

[Alfred Tennyson, 1809-1892](https://ebooks.adelaide.edu.au/t/tennyson/alfred/)

*Poems.*

[Elizabeth Barrett Browning, 1806–1861](https://ebooks.adelaide.edu.au/b/browning/elizabeth_barrett/)

[Robert Browning, 1812–1889](https://ebooks.adelaide.edu.au/b/browning/robert/)

*Poems; The Ring and the Book.*

[Matthew Arnold, 1822-1888](https://ebooks.adelaide.edu.au/a/arnold/matthew)

*Poems; Essays.*

[George Meredith, 1828-1909](https://ebooks.adelaide.edu.au/m/meredith/george/)

*Poems; The Egoist.*

[Dante Gabriel Rossetti, 1828-1882](https://ebooks.adelaide.edu.au/r/rossetti/dante_gabriel/)

*Poems and Translations.*

[Christina Georgina Rossetti, 1830-1894.](https://ebooks.adelaide.edu.au/r/rossetti/christina/)

*Poems.*

Algernon Charles Swinburne, 1837–1909

*Poems and Letters.*

Gerald Manley Hopkins, 1844-1889

*Poems and Prose.*

**The Novelists**

[Thomas Love Peacock, 1785–1866](https://ebooks.adelaide.edu.au/p/peacock/thomas_love/)

*Nightmare Abbey; Gryll Grange.*

[William Makepeace Thackeray, 1811-1863](https://ebooks.adelaide.edu.au/t/thackeray/william_makepeace/)

*Vanity Fair; The History of Henry Esmond.*

[Charles Dickens, 1812-1870](https://ebooks.adelaide.edu.au/d/dickens/charles/)

*The Posthumous Papers of the Pickwick Club; David Copperfield; The Adventures of Oliver Twist; A Tale of Two Cities; Bleak House; Hard Times; Nicholas Nickleby; Dombey and Son; Great Expectations; Martin Chuzzlewit; Christmas Stories; Little Dorrit; Our Mutual Friend; The Mystery of Edwin Drood.*

[Anthony Trollope, 1815-1882](https://ebooks.adelaide.edu.au/t/trollope/anthony/)

*The Barsetshire Novels; The Palliser Novels; Orley Farm; The Way We Live Now.*

[Wilkie Collins, 1824-1889](https://ebooks.adelaide.edu.au/c/collins/wilkie/)

*The Moonstone; The Woman in White; No Name.*

[Elizabeth Gaskell, 1810-1865](https://ebooks.adelaide.edu.au/g/gaskell/elizabeth/)

*Cranford; Mary Barton; North and South.*

[Charlotte Bronte, 1816-1855](https://ebooks.adelaide.edu.au/b/bronte/charlotte/)

*Jane Eyre; Villette.*

[Emily Bronte, 1818-1848](https://ebooks.adelaide.edu.au/b/bronte/emily/)

*Poems; Wuthering Heights.*

[George Eliot, 1819–1880](https://ebooks.adelaide.edu.au/e/eliot/george/)

*Adam Bede; Silas Marner; The Mill on the Floss; Middlemarch; Daniel Deronda.*

[George MacDonald, 1824-1905](https://ebooks.adelaide.edu.au/m/macdonald/george/)

*Lilith; At the Back of the North Wind.*

[R. D. Blackmore, 1825-1900](https://ebooks.adelaide.edu.au/b/blackmore/rd/)

*Lorna Doone; The Maid of Sker.*

[R. M. Ballantyne, 1825-1894](https://ebooks.adelaide.edu.au/b/ballantyne/rm)

*Coral Island.*

[Samuel Butler, 1835-1902](https://ebooks.adelaide.edu.au/b/butler/samuel/)

*Erewhon; The Way of All Flesh.*