

Late Renaissance England

Political Scenario

- Elizabeth I (1558-1603)
- James I (1603-1625)
- Charles I (1625-1649) — later beheaded
- Growing tensions between monarch and Parliament
- English Civil War (1642-1651) and Puritan Rule
- Middle class was emerging, and there was increased urbanization
- Trade and commerce flourished
- Education and literacy spread
- A period of literary diversity—poetry, prose, and translation
- Growing interest in science and exploration
- Influence of Renaissance humanism

Literary Developments

- Shakespeare's mature works like Hamlet, Othello, King Lear, Macbeth and Dramatic Romances (Cymbeline, Pericles, The Winter's Tale and The Tempest)
- Metaphysical poetry of Donne, Herbert and others
- Cavalier Poets like Lovelace and Suckling supported King Charles I against the Puritans
- Jacobean (Post-Shakespearean) drama written by Webster, Middleton, Beaumont and Fletcher and others
- Prose writers like Francis Bacon and Robert Burton
- Translation of classical works was done by Surrey and others

Sir Thomas Wyatt (1503-42)

- Introduced the Petrarchan sonnet to England
- Was influenced by Italian Renaissance poets like Petrarch
- Developed English lyric poetry
- Translated classical masters
- Major Poems
- “Whoso list to hunt”
- “My lute, awake!”
- “They flee from me”

- Poems were included in Tottel's Miscellany (1557), the first anthology in English

Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey (1516-47)

- Further developed English sonnet form
- Introduced blank verse (unrhymed iambic pentameter)
- Translated classical works like Virgil's Aeneid
- Wrote elegies, satires, and narrative poems
- Influenced Shakespeare and later poets
- Major Poems
- "Love, that doth reign and live within my thought"
- "The soote season"
- "The Aeneid" (translation of Virgil's Books 2 and 4)
- Poems were included in Tottel's Miscellany (1557), the first anthology in English

The Sonnet

- Sonnet invented by Giacomo da Lentini
- The sonnet form was first written by the late medieval poet Dante
- The Italian Renaissance poet Petrarch perfected it
- Sir Thomas Wyatt introduced the Petrarchan sonnet form to England
- Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey (1516-1547), further developed English sonnet
- Characteristics of Petrarchan Sonnet
- 14-line poem, usually in iambic pentameter
- Divided in octave (8 lines) and sestet (6 lines)
- Rhyme Scheme: ABBA ABBA CDE CDE OR CDC CDC
- Characteristics of English Sonnet
- 14-line poem, usually in iambic pentameter
- Divided into three quatrains and a final couplet
- Rhyme scheme: ABAB CDCD EFEF GG
- Explored themes: love, beauty, friendship, mortality

Major Poets

- Sir Thomas Wyatt
- Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey
- Philip Sidney
- Astrophel and Stella, sonnet sequence

- Arcadia, long prose romance
- Defence of Poesy or Apology for Poetry, literary criticism
- Edmund Spenser
- Amoretti
- Epithalamion
- Prothalamion
- William Shakespeare
- 154 sonnets and 2 long poems
- John Donne

Edmund Spenser (1552-1599)

- Born in London, received a humanist education
- Blended chivalric humanism with Christian ideals
- Served noblemen like the Bishop of Rochester and Leicester
- Was an English planter in Ireland
- Married Maccabeus Chylde and later Elizabeth Boyle
- Invented Spenserian stanza and Spenserian sonnet

Major Works

- The Shepheardes Calender (1579)
- Dedicated to Sir Philip Sidney
- Published anonymously under the pseudonym Immerito (meaning “unworthy”)
- A group of 12 eclogues one for each month, sung by various shepherds
- Complaints (1591)
- Daphnida (1591)
- Amoretti and Epithalamion (1595)
- Colin Clout’s Come Home Again (1595)
- Four Hymns (1596)
- Prothalamion (1596)
- A View of the Present State of Ireland (1598)

Faerie Queene (1596)

- Long, dense allegory in epic form of Christian values tied to Arthurian legends
- In 1590, first three books of the Faerie Queene
- In 1596, 6 books of the Faerie Queene published together

- Mutabilitie Canto, the seventh book (fragment) appeared in the folio in 1609
- Introductory letter to Sir Walter Raleigh
- Initially intended as a Courtesy Book

The Plan of the Book

- Spenser outlines a plan for 24 books
- 12 books, each based on a knight exemplifying “private virtues” based on Gloriana
- 12 books based on King Arthur displaying “public virtues”
- Aristotle is the source of these virtues; Aquinas also an influence
- Arthur stands for Magnificence
- Gloriana / Faerie Queene stands for Glory
- Mutabilitie canto represents constancy
- Only 6 out of the first 12 completed
- First major poem to be written in Spenserian stanza

Main Characters

- Redcrosse Knight (Book I) represents Holiness
- Guyon (Book II) represents Temperance
- Britomart (Book III): represents Chastity
- Triamond and Cambell (Book IV) represent Friendship
- Artegall (Book V) represents Justice
- Calidore (Book VI) represents Courtesy
- Prince Arthur represents idealized Chivalry and Magnificence
- Queen Gloriana represents Glory

Epithalamion (1595)

- Written in 1594 to celebrate Spenser’s marriage to Elizabeth Boyle
- Published along with Amoretti
- Epithalamion is the Greek term for “marriage song”
- 24-stanza poem, each stanza representing an hour of the wedding day
- 365 long lines
- Use of classical and nature symbols
- Themes
- Love and marriage
- Fertility and abundance

- Time and mortality

Prothalamion (1596)

- Written in 1596 to celebrate the double marriage of two noble sisters, Katherine and Elizabeth Somerset
- Prothalamion is a word coined by Spenser; it denotes “betrothal song”
- 10-stanza poem describing the marriage procession of the brides
- The brides are allegorically described as swans accompanied by nymphs
- The speaker is a discontented courtier

Spenserian Sonnet

- Spenser developed a variation of the English Sonnet, called Spenserian Sonnet
- 14 lines of iambic pentameter, divided into three quatrains and a final couplet, like in an English Sonnet
- Rhyme scheme: ABAB BCBC CDCD EE

Beginning of English Prose

Sir Philip Sidney (1554-86)

- Chivalric humanist born in Kent, England in a prominent noble family
- Educated at Oxford University
- Travelled extensively throughout Europe
- Served as a diplomat and soldier
- Classical influences in writing
- None of his works were published in his lifetime
- Pioneering writer of English Renaissance literature
- Died in Netherlands

Astrophel and Stella

- A sonnet sequence
- Depicts Astrophel (Sidney)’s love for Stella (Penelope Devereux)
- Consists of 108 sonnets and 11 songs
- Considered one of the greatest sonnet sequences in English literature
- Deals with Astrophel’s initial love for Stella, his despair and longing and his acceptance and transcendence

The Defence of Poesy

- A critical essay also called Apology for Poetry
- Written in 1580, published posthumously in 1595
- Response to Puritan criticisms of poetry and theatre
- Especially Stephen Gosson’s School of Abuse

- Main Arguments
- Poetry is ancient and universal
- Poetry is a divine art, inspired by God
- Poetry has moral and educational value
- Poetry can shape culture and society
- Poetry is imitation of nature
- Poetry is “speaking picture” with the aim “to teach and delight”
- Poets are “makers” or “vates”... The Countess of Pembroke’s Arcadia
- A prose romance
- Dedicated to Sidney’s sister, Mary Herbert, Countess of Pembroke
- Prose romance with embedded poems and eclogues
- Multi-layered narrative with frame story, inner stories, and digressions
- Arcadia means an idyllic, pastoral place
- Characters
- Philisides—noble, virtuous man who represents Sidney
- Pamela—embodiment of ideal feminine virtue.
- Musidorus—noble, brave, and loyal prince who loves Pamela
- Philoclea—Pamela’s sister
- King Basilius and Queen Gynecia—Pamela’s parents

Sir Francis Bacon (1561-1626)

- Son of Sir Nicholas Bacon, Lord Keeper of the Great Seal
- Educated at Trinity College, Cambridge (1573-1575)
- Traveled to France and Italy
- Studied law and became a barrister
- Was Member of Parliament and was knighted in 1603
- Appointed Attorney General and Lord Chancellor
- Impeached and removed from office in 1621

Major Works

- Philosophical Works
- The Advancement of Learning (1605) outlines Bacon’s vision for a new approach to knowledge
- Novum Organum (1620) presents Bacon’s scientific method and theory of induction
- The New Atlantis (1627) describes an ideal society dedicated to scientific inquiry; based on More’ Utopia

- Literary Works
- Essays (1597-1625) on various topics, including politics, philosophy, and literature
- The History of the Reign of King Henry VII (1622) is a historical account of the Tudor dynasty
- The History of the Life and Death of Henry VIII (1622) is a biography of Henry VIII
- Also wrote scientific works
- Wrote in both Latin and English

Major Works

- Bacon upheld some major philosophical ideas
- Empiricism, or the importance of experience, observation and experimentation in scientific inquiry
- Induction, the principle of drawing general conclusions from specific observations—science emerged from this
- The Four Idols: Bacon identified four sources of error in human thinking—the Idols of the Tribe, the Cave, the Market, and the Theatre
- Bacon's emphasis on empiricism and experimentation contributed to the Scientific Revolution
- His ideas influenced Enlightenment thinkers, such as René Descartes and John Locke

Major Essays

- Of Studies
- Of Truth
- Of Death
- Of Unity in Religion
- Of Revenge
- Of Adversity
- Of Simulation and Dissimulation
- Of Marriage and Single Life
- Of Parents and Children

Robert Burton (1577-1640)

- English writer, scholar, and theologian
- Burton's magnum opus, "The Anatomy of Melancholy", was first published in 1621
- A comprehensive study of melancholy, exploring its causes, symptoms, and treatments.
- The book is divided into three main parts: (i) the definition and causes of melancholy, (ii) its symptoms, and (iii) its treatments.
- Draws on a wide range of sources, including classical literature, philosophy, medicine, and theology
- Use of humour and satire to critique the excesses of his time and to explore the human condition

- The book reflects Burton's classical education and his interest in classical thought, particularly the works of Aristotle and Galen

Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679)

- Son of Thomas Hobbes, a clergyman, and Edith Hobbes
- Born in the year of the defeat of Spanish Armada (Spanish navy was defeated by the English)
- Educated at Oxford (1603-1608)
- Philosophical Works:
- Leviathan (1651) is Hobbes's magnum opus, exploring the nature of man and the state
- Asserts that a state needs an absolute sovereign (ruler)
- Develops Social Contract Theory of kingship
- Also wrote political works

Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679)

- Major Ideas
- State of Nature: Hobbes's concept of the natural state of humanity, characterized by conflict and competition.
- Social Contract: Hobbes argued that individuals enter into a contract with the sovereign to maintain order and security.
- Absolute Sovereignty: Hobbes believed that the sovereign holds absolute power and authority.

Thomas Browne (1605-82)

- English polymath with wide learning in diverse fields including science and medicine
- Educated at Winchester College and Oxford University
- Studied and practised medicine
- Had a unique prose style, blending scientific and philosophical ideas with literary flair

Thomas Browne (1605-82)

- Major Works
- Religio Medici (1642) is a spiritual and philosophical autobiography
- Pseudodoxia Epidemica (1646) is a comprehensive survey of common errors and superstitions
- Hydriotaphia, Urn Burial (1658) is a meditation on mortality and the burial of the dead

Thomas Browne (1605-82)

- Major Ideas
- Skeptical Humanism—Browne gave importance to reason, observation, and individualism
- Memento Mori (this phrase appears in Religio Medici)—(means “Remember, you will die”)—Browne's focus on mortality and the transience of human life
- Paradoxical Thinking—Browne's exploration of contradictions and paradoxes in life and nature

University Wits

University Wits

- The term “University Wits” was coined by George Saintsbury
- A group of English playwrights and poets who emerged in the late 16th and early 17th centuries, characterized by their education at Oxford or Cambridge Universities and their innovative use of language and dramatic techniques

University Wits

- Cambridge Wits
- Christopher Marlowe (1564-1593)
- Robert Greene (1558-1592)
- Thomas Nashe (1567-1601)
- Oxford Wits
- John Lyly (1554-1606)
- George Peele (1556-1596)
- Thomas Lodge (1558-1625)
- Thomas Kyd (1558-1594) did not go to any University, but is included in this group because he wrote like them.

University Wits

- Characteristics
- Classical Education: University Wits were influenced by classical Greek and Roman literature and drama.
- Innovative Language: They experimented with language, using complex metaphors, imagery, and wordplay. For example, Marlowe’s “Mighty Line”.
- Dramatic Techniques: They developed new dramatic techniques, such as the use of soliloquies and cross-dressing.
- Satire and Social Commentary: Many University Wits used satire to comment on social issues, politics, and morality.
- Collaboration: They often collaborated on plays and poems, influencing each other's work.

John Lyly (1554-1606)

- Developed Euphuism
- Lyly's writing style, characterized by elaborate prose, complex metaphors, and witty dialogue
- Helped establish the prose romance genre in England
- Lyly's plays reflect his innovative use of language and dramatic techniques
- Lyly's works likely influenced Shakespeare's writing style
- Major Works
- Euphues: The Anatomy of Wit (1578) is a prose romance that launched Lyly's career
- Euphues and His England (1580) is the sequel to Euphues

John Lyly (1554-1606)

- Other Plays
- Campaspe (1581)
- Sapho and Phao (1584)
- The Woman in the Moon (1595)
- Endymion (1591)
- Midas (1592)

George Peele (1556-1596)

- Experimented with many forms of drama
- Plays often blend romance, comedy, violence, adventure, and draw on historical themes
- Major Plays
- The Arraignment of Paris (1581)
- The Battle of Alcazar (1588-1589)
- Edward I (1590)
- The Old Wives Tale (1590)
- David and Bethsabe (1594)

Thomas Lodge (1558-1625)

- Lodge helped establish the prose romance genre in England
- Major Works
- Defence of Poetry, Musick, and Stage Plays (1579) is a reply to Stephen Gosson
- Scilla's Metamorphosis (1589) is a narrative poem
- Rosalynde (1590) is a prose romance, the source of William Shakespeare's As You Like It
- A Margarite of America (1596) is a prose romance
- Wits Miserie (1596) is a satirical pamphlet
- Phillis, a sonnet cycle... Robert Greene (1558-1592)
- Greene attacked Shakespeare as “an upstart crow beautified with our feathers.... A tiger’s heart wrapped in a player’s hide.... The only Shakescene in the country”
- Prose Romances
- Pandosto (1588), source of The Winter’s Tale
- Menaphon (1589)
- Plays
- Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay (1589-1590)

- The Scottish History of James the Fourth (1590-1591)

Thomas Kyd (1558-1594)

- Friend of Marlowe
- Established the revenge tragedy genre influenced by Seneca
- Plays feature intricate, multi-layered plots
- Major Works
- The Spanish Tragedy (1587-1592) - a play
- The First Part of Hieronimo (1592) - a play (possibly a precursor to The Spanish Tragedy)
- Soliman and Perseda (1592) - a play that appears within The Spanish Tragedy also
- Arden of Feversham (1592) - domestic tragedy attributed to Kyd
- Cornelia (1594) - A tragedy translated by Kyd from a Senecan play
- Plays explored the themes of
- Revenge and Justice
- Love and Betrayal
- Power and Corruption
- Madness

The Spanish Tragedy (1587)

- The ghost of Andrea, a Spanish nobleman killed in battle wants revenge for his death, and is guided by the spirit of Revenge.
- Bel-imperia, Andrea's lover and Lorenzo's sister, mourns his death and seeks her own revenge.
- Spain wins a war against Portugal, and the Portuguese prince Balthazar is captured by Horatio and Lorenzo, and brought to the Spanish court.
- Balthazar falls in love with Bel-imperia, but she loves Horatio, the son of the Spanish marshal Hieronimo—a love triangle!
- Lorenzo, Bel-imperia's brother, conspires with Balthazar to kill Horatio (out of jealousy)
- Horatio is brutally murdered and hanged in his father Hieronimo's garden.

Horatio is Killed

- Hieronimo discovers his son's body and vows to seek justice and vengeance.
- Hieronimo appears to go mad with grief, but secretly plots revenge against his son's murderers. His wife Isabella is also mad with grief.
- Hieronimo organizes a play within the play to enact his revenge. The murderers Lorenzo and Balthazar also act in the play.
- During the performance, Hieronimo kills Lorenzo and Balthazar, with Bel-imperia assisting, and then he reveals the truth to the audience.

- Hieronimo kills himself to avoid capture, leaving the court in shock.

Subplot involving Villuppo

- Portuguese nobleman Villuppo lies that Alexandro killed Balthazar, the son of the Viceroy of Portugal.
- Alexandro is imprisoned based on Villuppo's lies.
- Villuppo's plot is revealed when Portugal makes peace with Spain, and he is executed.

Subplot involving Pedringano and Serberine

- Lorenzo manipulates Pedringano, Bel-Imperia's servant, to spy on Bel-imperia.
- Lorenzo pays Pedringano to kill Serberine (Balthazar's servant who witnessed Horatio's murder), to cover the tracks of Horatio's murder.
- Pedringano successfully kills Serberine and is arrested for the murder of Serberine.
- Lorenzo provides Pedringano with a false letter, making him believe he will be pardoned.
- Pedringano is put to death
- After Pedringano's execution, Hieronimo gets from the hangman a letter Pedringano has written to Lorenzo, and comes to know the truth of his son's murder.

Christopher Marlowe (1564-1593)

- Born in Canterbury as the son of a cobbler
- Educated at Corpus Christi College, Cambridge
- Wrote plays for Admiral's Men
- Marlowe's plays are written in blank verse, a style that influenced Shakespeare
- Marlowe's plays often feature complex, flawed protagonists
- Marlovian Heroes illustrate the nature of power and ambition
- Known for his controversial life—atheism, homosexuality, espionage, treason
- Died in a drunken brawl at Deptford

Major Works

- Tamburlaine the Great (1587-1588)
- A two-part play about the conquests of Timur (Tamburlaine)
- Explores themes of power, ambition, and mortality
- Features Marlowe's signature blank verse style
- Doctor Faustus (1589-1592)
- A tragic play about a scholar who sells his soul to the devil
- Examines themes of knowledge, power, and redemption
- Features iconic scenes, such as the famous "Seven Deadly Sins" scene

Major Works

- The Jew of Malta (1589-1590)
- A play about a Jewish merchant Barabas seeking revenge against Christians
- His daughter Abigail ran away with Lorenzo, a Christian
- Explores themes of prejudice, revenge, and identity
- Features complex characters and moral ambiguity
- Edward II (1591-1592)
- A historical play about the deposition of King Edward II
- Examines themes of power, politics, and personal relationships
- Features Marlowe's innovative use of language and dramatic structure

Major Works

- Dido, Queen of Carthage (1584-1586)
- A play about the legendary Queen Dido and Aeneas
- Explores themes of love, duty, and national identity
- Features Marlowe's early experimentation with blank verse
- The Massacre at Paris (1592-1593)
- A play about the St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre
- Examines themes of religious conflict, power, and violence
- Features Marlowe's use of historical events to comment on contemporary issues
- Hero and Leander (1593)
- A narrative poem about star-crossed lovers
- Explores themes of love, desire, and fate
- Features Marlowe's mastery of poetic forms and language

Doctor Faustus (pub. 1604)

- Faustus is Dissatisfied
- Faustus, a respected German scholar, becomes dissatisfied with traditional forms of knowledge.
- He decides to learn magic to gain more power and understanding.
- Faustus's friends Valdes and Cornelius teach him black magic.
- Faustus summons Mephistophilis, a devil.
- Mephistophilis warns Faustus about the horrors of hell.
- Faustus offers his soul to Lucifer in exchange for 24 years of service from Mephistophilis.

The Plot

- Wagner
- Wagner's Adventures
- Wagner, Faustus's servant, learns magic and recruits a clown named Robin to assist him.
- The Deal
- Mephistophilis returns, accepting Faustus's offer.
- Faustus signs the deal with his blood.
- The words "Homo fuge" ("O man, fly") appear on his arm.
- Faustus has second thoughts and wonders if he should repent.
- Mephistophilis gives Faustus rich gifts and a book of spells.
- Mephistophilis answers Faustus's questions about the world.

The Plot

- The Seven Deadly Sins
- Mephistophilis refuses to answer Faustus's question about who made the universe.
- Mephistophilis and Lucifer present the Seven Deadly Sins to Faustus.
- Faustus is impressed by the display and quiets his doubts.
- Faustus's Travels and Mischief
- Faustus travels with Mephistophilis, using his new powers.
- He visits the Pope's court in Rome, makes himself invisible, and plays tricks.
- Faustus disrupts the Pope's banquet, stealing food and boxing the Pope's ears.
- Faustus travels through European courts, gaining fame.
- He is invited to the court of Charles V, the German emperor.

The Plot

- Alexander the Great
- Charles V asks Faustus to conjure Alexander the Great.
- Faustus succeeds, impressing Charles V.
- Benvolio knight scoffs at Faustus's powers.
- Faustus punishes the knight by making antlers sprout from his head.
- The knight vows revenge.
- Robin's Misadventures
- Robin, Wagner's clown, learns magic.
- Robin and fellow stablehand Rafe undergo comic misadventures.
- Robin summons Mephistophilis, who threatens punishment.

- Mephistophilis warns Robin and Rafe of their foolishness.
- Mephistophilis may transform them into animals (text unclear).... The Plot
- Horse-Courser and Duke of Vanholt
- Faustus travels, playing tricks on people, including a horse-courser.
- He sells a horse that turns into straw when ridden into a river.
- Faustus is invited to the Duke's court.
- He performs feats, impressing the Duke and Duchess.
- Victims of his trickery (horse-courser, Robin, Dick, etc.) appear.
- Faustus casts spells, sending them away.
- Approaching Doom
- Faustus's 24-year deal with Lucifer nears its end.
- Faustus dreads impending death.
- Mephistophilis summons Helen of Troy for Faustus.

Faustus's Last Moments

- Faustus impresses scholars with Helen's presence.
- An old man urges Faustus to repent; Faustus refuses.
- Faustus summons Helen again, praising her beauty.
- Time runs out; Faustus tells scholars about his pact.
- Scholars are horror-stricken, resolving to pray for Faustus.
- Faustus begs for mercy on his final night, but does not repent.
- Devils appear at midnight, rip Faustus's body to pieces and drag his soul to hell.
- Scholars find Faustus's limbs in the morning.
- They decide to hold a funeral for Faustus.

Doctor Faustus

- Epilogue
- The chorus reflects on Faustus's tragic fall.
- The play ends with a warning about the dangers of ambition and pride.
- Subplots and Incidents
- The subplot involving Wagner, Faustus's servant, provides comic relief.
- The scenes with the Seven Deadly Sins, summoned by Mephistopheles, serve as a moral commentary.
- Faustus's encounter with Helen of Troy represents his desire for earthly pleasure.
- Themes

- The dangers of ambition and pride
- The consequences of seeking knowledge and power at any cost
- The struggle between good and evil
- The nature of sin and redemption

Thomas Nashe (1567-1601)

- Introduced the picaresque fiction incorporating satire and social commentary
- Major Works
- The Unfortunate Traveller (1594) - An episodic picaresque narrative on the journey of Jack Wilton, a rogue and adventurer, including travels to Italy and Germany
- Pierce Penniless (1592)
- Summers Last Will and Testament (1592)
- The Terrors of the Night (1594)
- Lenten Stuff (1599)