

Match the texts with the period of the English literature.

1. The Anglo-Saxons

4. The Age of Reason

2. The medieval period

5. The Romantics

3. The Renaissance

A. Thinkers of 1500-1660 reverted back to the idealism of classical civilizations. Men and women were concerned with the “here and now”. During this period, feelings and emotions were key to illustrating humanism, with the story more oriented on the character rather than the adventure. In addition, literature of that time revolved more around having a real humanistic protagonist with a real story to tell. These basic ideals evolved from a humble place in life to a materialistic dream steeped in luxury. Moreover, with the invention of the printing press in 1440 by Johann Gutenberg, manuscripts were no longer needed to be hand- copied, and were able to be printed and delivered to the mass public inexpensively and swiftly. With more men and women educated due to the indirect results of the printing press, literature became widespread throughout Europe. The most famous English writers of this time were William Shakespeare, John Milton.

B. Old English literature did not begin with books, but with spoken verse and songs or epic poems. The purpose of these forms of literature was to pass along tribal history and values to a population who could not read or write. Warriors would gather in mead halls and scopos would recite poems or songs for hours or even days as a form of entertainment or ceremonial occasions. These poems were made very catchy so they could easily be recalled and thus retold. Violence and gore played a big part in the literature during the Anglo-Saxon age. According to the dictionary, violence is physical force or activity used to cause harm, damage or abuse. Gore is defined as blood that has been shed or to stab or pierce. This is exactly what was in the stories of this time-stabbing, blood, harm, damage, abuse, etc. This can be seen a great deal in Beowulf.

C. This period in English literature is associated with the movement known as Romanticism. This period began in the 18th century and continues on into the 19th century. The characteristics of Romanticism include a focus on strong emotions, awe of nature, and a break from following rigid structure. These and other characteristics arose from a desire to rebel against the scientific rationalization of the natural world that was occurring due to rapid increases in scientific progress. Romantic literature addressed the human psyche in new ways, placing importance on the unconscious and the imagination that was generally lacking in classical literature. Some literature from the Romantic movement took on supernatural or occult subjects, and many early important works in the horror genre originated from this movement. Some of the most noted Romantic writers in English literature during this time period was Jane Austen, Edgar Allan Poe, William Wordsworth, and Lord Byron.

D. Literature during this period was often considered a tool for the advancement of knowledge. Writers were often found observing nature in their attempts to express their beliefs. Human nature was considered a constant that observation and reason could be applied to for the advancement of knowledge. Within these circumstances, the Age of Satire was born. Satire was the most popular literary tool that was utilized by writers of the time. With the help of satire, writers were better able to educate the public through literature. Its function was to acknowledge a problem in society and attempt to reform the problem in a comical manner while still educating the public. The most outstanding writers of this period are Alexander Pope, Daniel Defoe, Jonathan Swift.

E. Middle English literature refers to the literature written in the form of the English language known as Middle English, from the 12th century until the 1470s. During the Middle Ages, a great emphasis was placed on the blend of fantasy and reality. Though characters were given human characteristics, their personalities transcended to those of fictitious figures (God, Saints, and revered leaders). Additionally, these stories incorporated the codes of romance and honor, reliving the ideals of chivalry in writing. Furthermore, there was a religious overtone hidden in these works. Because only monks could hand-copy these manuscripts in monasteries, only a few were made available to the rich and noble. As for the peasants, the only way to pass down these stories from generation to generation was by words of mouth. For example, Geoffrey Chaucer (1343- 1400), the famous author of *The Canterbury Tales*, practiced these forms of writing in his narration of the social classes at this time.