

English 4 CP Outline

Old English/Anglo-Saxon Period **Years: 449-1066**

Content:

- strong belief in fate
- juxtaposition of church and pagan worlds
- admiration of heroic warriors who prevail in battle
- express religious faith and give moral instruction through literature

Style/Genres:

- oral tradition of literature
- poetry dominant genre
- unique verse form
 - caesura
 - alliteration
 - repetition
 - 4 beat rhythm

Effect:

- Christianity helps literacy to spread
- introduces Roman alphabet to Britain
- oral tradition helps unite diverse peoples and their myths

Historical Context:

- life centered around ancestral tribes or clans that ruled themselves
- at first the people were warriors from invading outlying areas: Angles, Saxons, Jutes, and Danes
- later they were agricultural

Key Literature/Authors:

- *Beowulf*
- Bede
 - *Exeter Book*

Middle English Period **(The Medieval Period)** **Years: 1066-1485**

Content:

- plays that instruct the illiterate masses in morals and religion
- chivalric code of honor
- romances
- religious devotion

Style/Genres:

- oral tradition continues

- folk ballads
- mystery and miracle plays
- morality plays
- stock epithets
- kennings
- frame stories
- moral tales

Effect:

- church instructs its people through the morality and miracle plays
- an illiterate population is able to hear and see the literature

Historical Context:

- Crusades bring the development of a money economy for the first time in Britain
- trading increases dramatically as a result of the Crusades
- William the Conqueror crowned king in 1066
- Henry III crowned king in 1154 brings a judicial system, royal courts, juries, and chivalry to Britain

Key Literature/Authors:

- Domesday Book
- L'Morte de Arthur
- Geoffrey Chaucer

The Renaissance Years: 1485-1660

Content:

- world view shifts from religion and after life to one stressing the human life on earth
- popular theme: development of human potential
- popular theme: many aspects of love explored
 - unrequited love
 - constant love
 - timeless love
 - courtly love
 - love subject to change

Style/Genres:

- poetry
 - sonnet
- drama
 - written in verse
 - supported by royalty
 - tragedies, comedies, histories
- metaphysical poetry
 - elaborate and unexpected metaphors called conceits

Effect:

- commoners welcomed at some play productions (like ones at the Globe) while conservatives try to close the theaters on grounds that they promote brazen behaviors
- not all middle-class embrace the metaphysical poets and their abstract conceits

Historical Context:

- War of Roses ends in 1485 and political stability arrives
- Printing press helps stabilize English as a language and allows more people to read a variety of literature
- Economy changes from farm-based to one of international trade

Key Literature/Authors:

- * William Shakespeare
- * John Donne
- * Cavalier Poets
- * Metaphysical Poets
- * Christopher Marlowe
- * Andrew Marvell

Neoclassical Period (The Restoration) Years: 1660-1798

Content:

- emphasis on reason and logic
- stresses harmony, stability, wisdom
- Locke: a social contract exists between the government and the people. The government governs guaranteeing “natural rights” of life, liberty, and property

Style/Genres:

- satire: uses irony and exaggeration to poke fun at human faults and foolishness in order to correct human behavior
- poetry
- essays
- letters, diaries, biographies
- novels

Effect:

- * emphasis on the individual
- * belief that man is basically evil
- * approach to life: “the world as it should be”

Historical Context:

- 50% of the men are functionally literate (a dramatic rise)
- Fenced enclosures of land cause demise of traditional village life
- Factories begin to spring up as industrial revolution begins
- Impoverished masses begin to grow as farming life declines and factories build
- Coffee houses—where educated men spend evenings with literary and political associates

Key Literature/Authors:

- *Alexander Pope
- *Daniel Defoe
- *Jonathan Swift
- *Samuel Johnson
- *John Bunyan

Romanticism

Years: 1798 – 1832

Content:

- *human knowledge consists of impressions and ideas formed in the individual's mind
- * introduction of gothic elements and terror/horror stories and novels
- * in nature one can find comfort and peace that the urbanized towns and factory environments cannot offer

Style/Genres:

- *poetry
- * lyrical ballads

Effects:

- * evil attributed to society not to human nature
- * human beings are basically good
- * movement of protest: a desire for personal freedom
- * children seen as hapless victims of poverty and exploitation

Historical Context:

- * Napoleon rises to power in France and opposes England militarily and economically
- * gas lamps developed
- * Tory philosophy that government should NOT interfere with private enterprise
- * middle class gains representation in the British parliament
- * Railroads begin to run

Key Literature/Authors:

- * **Novelists:** Jane Austen, Mary Shelley
- * **Poets:** Robert Burns, William Blake, William Wordsworth, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, Lord Byron, Percy Shelley, John Keats

Victorian Period

Years: 1832-1900

Content:

- * conflict between those in power and the common masses of laborers and the poor
- * shocking life of sweatshops and urban poor is highlighted in literature to insist on reform
- * country versus city life
- * sexual discretion (or lack of it)
- * strained coincidences
- * romantic triangles
- * heroines in physical danger
- * aristocratic villains
- * misdirected letters
- * bigamous marriages

Genres/Styles:

- * **novel** becomes popular for first time; mass produced for the first time
 - *bildungsroman: "coming of age"
 - * political novels
 - * detective novels: (Sherlock Holmes)
 - * serialized novels
- * **elegies**
- * **poetry:** easier to understand

- *dramatic monologues
- * **drama:** comedies of manners
- * **magazines** offer stories to the masses

Effect:

- * literature begins to reach the masses

Historical Context:

- * paper becomes cheap; magazines and novels cheap to mass produce
- * unprecedented growth of industry and business in Britain
- * unparalleled dominance of nations, economies and trade abroad

Key Literature/Authors:

* Charles Dickens, Thomas Hardy , Rudyard Kipling, Robert Louis Stevenson, George Eliot, Oscar Wilde, Alfred Lord Tennyson, Darwin, Charlotte Bronte, Robert Browning

Modern/Post Modern Period of Literature Years: 1900-1980

Content:

- *lonely individual fighting to find peace and comfort in a world that has lost its absolute values and traditions
- * man is nothing except what he makes of himself
- * a belief in situational ethics—no absolute values. Decisions are based on the situation one is involved in at the moment
- *mixing of fantasy with nonfiction; blurs lines of reality for reader
- * loss of the hero in literature
- * destruction made possible by technology

Genres/Styles:

- * poetry: free verse
- * epiphanies begin to appear in literature
- * speeches
- * memoir
- * novels

- ☐ stream of consciousness
- ☐ detached, unemotional, humorless
- ☐ present tense
- ☐ magic realism

Effect:

- *an approach to life: “Seize life for the moment and get all you can out of it.”

Historical Context:

- *British Empire loses 1 million soldiers to World War I
- * Winston Churchill leads Britain through WW II, and the Germans bomb England directly
- * British colonies demand independence

Key Literature/Authors:

James Joyce, Joseph Conrad, D.H. Lawrence, Graham Greene, Dylan Thomas, Nadine Gordimer, George Orwell, William Butler Yeats, Bernard Shaw

Contemporary Period of Literature (Post Modern Period Continued) 1980-Present

Content:

- * concern with connections between people
- * exploring interpretations of the past
- * open-mindedness and courage that comes from being an outsider
- * escaping those ways of living that blind and dull the human spirit

Genres/Styles:

- * **all genres represented**
- * fictional confessional/diaries
 - 50% of contemporary fiction is written in the first person
- * narratives: both fiction and nonfiction
- * emotion-provoking
- * humorous irony
- * storytelling emphasized
- * autobiographical essays
- * mixing of fantasy with nonfiction; blurs lines of reality for reader

Effect:

- * too soon to tell

Historical Context:

- * a world growing smaller due to ease of communications between societies
- * a world launching a new beginning of a century and a millennium
- * media culture interprets values and events for individuals

Key Literature/Authors:

Seamus Heaney, Doris Lessing, Louis de Bernieres, Kazuo Ishiguro, Tom Stoppard, Salman Rushdie. John Le Carre, Ken Follett