

18th Century of English Literature

1700 - 1798

English literature in the 18th Century:

- 1: Historical Background.
- 2: General feature of 18th century
- 3: Neoclassicism.
- 4: Major writers of Neoclassical school.
- 5: Sentimentalism
- 6: Major Writers of Sentimental School
- 7: Pre-romanticism in English poetry.
- 8: Beginning of the Modern Novel.
- 9: Major Events of the 18th century.

Historical Background

- 1: Period of a comparatively peaceful development in England
- 2: Two hostile parties: Whigs and Tories
- 3: Talented writers : Servants of the two parties.
- 4: Development of social life
- 5: A public movement : The Enlightenment

What is the 18th century known as?

- In Europe, the 18th century was a period of intellectual, social, and political ferment. This time is often referred to as:
- **"Age of Enlightenment"** for it was in the 18th century that the ideas of the previous 100 years were implemented on a broad scale.
- **Longman Dictionary** : The Enlightenment is the period in the 18th century in Europe when certain thinkers taught that science and use of reason would improve the human condition .
- Also known as
- **"The Age of Reason"** (anything could be achieved through the calm working of human mind).

➤ “Age of Classicism”

- “A movement in literature and arts during the 17th and 18th centuries in Europe that favored rationality and restraint and strict forms.
- In all the arts there was the fascination with ancient Greece and Rome.

➤ Age of Elegance:

- It displayed among the upper classes and elegant style of life.

➤ General features of the 18th century:

- Literature was characterised by the spirit of realism and romantic features like enthusiasm, passion, imaginations etc declined in this period.
- Reason, intellect, correctness, satirical spirit etc were the main characteristics of 18th century literature.
- Creative works shows a sense of order and moderation.
- Author display their cleverness, but not their heart and soul.
- Arguments in prose are calm and logical; poems are carefully structured and often contain classical allusions.
- Some writers satirize 'elegant' society and politics.

Writers of the 18th century :

- There are many famous writers in the 18th century.they include:
- Alexander Pope(Poet)
- Jonathan Swift (prose writer)
- Joseph Addison(Novelist)
- Daniel Defoe(Novelist)
- Jane Austin(Novelist)
- Samuel Johnson(Critic,poet essayist)
- Eliza haywood(Writer,actress and publisher)
- Mary Shelley (Novelist)
- Jean Jacques Rousseau(philosopher,writer and composer)

Neoclassicism

- Neoclassicism is can be broken down into its root.
- The word "Neo-classical" is merged with two words;
- Neo (new) Classical (Greek and Roman writings) = Neoclassicism
- It's proponents wanted to mimic the writings of Greek and Roman.

When did it occur?

- 18th century and early 19th century
- The movement itself began and concluded
- However Neoclassical literature
- Began being written in 1660
- Ended in 1798

Characteristics of the Neoclassicism:

- Neoclassicism is defined by Reason
- Society is more important than individual itself
- Rules and order
- Logic
- Tradition
- Constraint
- Conformity

Writers of the age:

- **Joseph Addison (1672 - 1719):**
- Essayist
- Poet
- **The campaign - poem**
- **The Campaign**, addressed to Marlborough, was published on december 14 (though dated 1705).
- **By its rejection of conventional classical imagery and its effective portrayal of Marlborough's military genius, it was an immediate success that perfectly expressed the nation's great hour of victory.**
- **Cato - play**
- **Cato the younger (95-46 B.C.)** was a Great Roman Statesman and Stoic. He took sides with Pompey in his unsuccessful civil war against Julius Caesar. After Pompey was defeated at Pharsalus, Cato and Scipio moved their forces to northern Africa. The play takes place in the city of Utica, located in the kingdom of Numidia.

Samuel Johnson

- **Samuel Johnson**(1709-1784) was an English writer who made lasting contributions to English literature.
- a poet,playwright,essayist,moralist,critic,biographer,editor and lexicographer.
- Father was a bookseller
- Physical deformity
- Studied in Oxford without finishing his courses because of poverty .
- Buried in poets corner on Westminster Abbey
- **Books;**
- **A Dictionary of English Language (1755)**
- **Vanity of human wishes-poem**
- **10 volumes of critical Biographies: Lives of the poets**

Richard Steele

- Sir Richard Steele (1672-1729)
- Born in Dublin, Ireland, in March 1672.
- The exact date of his birth is not known, but he was baptized on March 12.
- The British essayist, dramatist, and politician is best known for his collaboration with Addison on a series of essays for the
 - **Tatler**
 - **The Spectator.**

"Spectator" by Richard Steele

- The Spectator was a daily publication founded by Joseph Addison and Richard Steele in England.
- Lasting from 1711 to 1712.
- Each "paper", or "number", was approximately 2,500 words long, and the original run consisted of 555 numbers,
- Beginning on 1 March 1711.
- These were collected into seven volumes.

"The Tatler"

- Started in 1709 by Richard Steele,
- a Whig Irishman, who understood that the middle class needed more information together with entertainment and decided to publish a newspaper which would deal with politics and other more popular topics, such as fashion, entertainment and gossip from the Clubs and Coffee houses.
- Gradually the paper began to expose also issues of the day, current affairs, such as duels, gambling, discussions on good manners. It was published three times a week, in a single sheet written on both sides in two columns.
- Later Steele was joined by Joseph Addison, who excluded politics and political news in favour of discussions on cultural and moral issues and literary criticism.

Alexander Pope

- Alexander Pope (1688-1744) one of the greatest English poet.
- A form of tuberculosis affecting the spine that stunted his growth- Pope's height never exceeded four and half feet.
- Best known for his satirical and discursive poetry.
- The Rape of the Lock, The Dunciad, and An Essay on Criticism-
- As well known as for his translation of Homer.

Sentimentalism

- Excessively sentimental behaviour, writing, or speech.
"the author blends realism with surrealism, journalism with sentimentalism"
- The representative of sentimentalism are Oliver Goldsmith ,Laurance Sterne, Samuel Richardson and Thomas Gray.

Oliver Goldsmith

- Oliver Goldsmith was an Irish novelist, playwright and poet, who is best known for his novel:
- **The Vicar of Wakefield (1766)**
- It is the story of good and virtuous family which has great misfortunes; but all comes right in the end. The story is told by Dr. Primrose, the vicar kind and charitable with wife and five lovely children.
- Dr. Primrose, the vicar of Wakefield, is a wealthy man who lives in a peaceful community with his family. ... George is then sent to London, and the family is forced to move to a parish on Squire Thornhill's lands.
- His novel appeals to human sentiments as a means of achieving happiness and social justice.

Laurance Sterne (1713 - 1768)

- Born in Ireland.
- Educated in Cambridge university.
- Became an author at the age of 46.
- Most outstanding figure of English sentimentalist school.
- **His novels:**
- **Tristram Shandy (1760-7)**
- Tristram Shandy is Sterne's masterpiece and made him famous .
- It is a strange ,plotless novel.
- **"A Sentimental Journey "(1768)**
- Sentimentalism is named after his work .

Samuel Richardson

- Samuel Richardson (1689 - 1761)
- One of the representative of the sentimental school.
- **Main works:**
- **Pamela: (1740)**
- A real novel written in the form of letters .
- A conflict between a lusty gentleman's seduction
- A conflict between two sexes
- Victory for the moral principle
- Re-education of the gentleman
- A reformed rake makes the best husband .

Pamela

- A novel in three ways:
- 1: pictured the life and love of ordinary people.
- 2: It's intention was not only entertainment but also moral instruction.
- It described not only sayings and doings of the characters but also their secret thoughts and feelings.

Samuel Richardson

- **Features of Richardson 's Novel.**
- **1:**Richardson is the first novelist of sentimentalist tradition.His novels have a moral purpose.
- He is an outstanding novelist because he had much sympathy for women.He also exposed the moral hypocrisy of the society of his day.
- All of his novels arr written in the form of letters. He was the master of writing epistolary novels.

Thomas Gray

- Thomas Gray (1716 - 1771)
- Educated first in Eton.
- In 1734, he went to Cambridge university.
- In 1768, he was made professor of History and Modern languages at Cambridge.
- leader of the sentimental poetry of the day.
- **His masterpiece :**
- **Elegy written in a Country Churchyard (1750)**
- A model of sentimentalist poetry
- His style is sophisticated and allusive.

Pre-Romanticism

- "The term Pre romantic defines the sensibilities and spiritual states, trends, ideas and forms that developed at the end of the Neoclassical Period."
- **Robert Burns:(1759 - 1796)**
- Scottish poet
- Born at Scotland ,in a poor Scottish peasant's family
- Eldest of seven sons.
- National poet of Scotland ,a poet of peasants.
- Called a poet of the people .
- In 1786, he printed "**Poems, Chiefly in the Scottish Dialect**" and got \$20.
- **Poems:**
- **Rabbie Burns**
- **the National Bard.**
- **Bard of Ayrshire**
- **The Ploughman Poet**
- **Thetwo dogs**
- **Scots Wha hae**
- **Chiefly in the Scottish Dialect**
- **The tree of Liberty**
- **A Man ' Man for a that**
- **A red red rose**

William Blake

- **William Blake (1757 - 1827)-poet**
- Son of a London tradesman .
- Strange and imaginative child.
- Never went to School but learned to read and write at home.
- Famous for his short lyrics.
- Poetry strikes us with its childish vision and simplicity .
- **His works:**
- **The song of Innocence (1789)**
- **The song of experience (1794)**
- **Poetical Sketches**
- **The French Revolution**
- **American**
- **Milton**

The Chimney Sweeper

- This is from **The song of Experience**.
- The short luric contains chiefly the simple yet somewhat ironical speech of the boy Chimney sweeper as he describes his life of misery and its relation to "**God and His priest and King** "
- The language of the poem is concise, fluent ,plain and with deep implication.

The Chimney sweeper

- The Chimney Sweeper" is the title of a poem by William Blake, published in two parts in Songs of Innocence in 1789 and Songs of experience in 1793. The poem "The Chimney Sweeper" is set against the dark background of child labour that was prominent in England in the late 18th and 19th century.
- In reality the theme is about the loss of innocence. It is a sad tale of children, who have no childhood at all. The child in the poem is sold by his father, after his mother dies, into chimney sweeping. He befriends Tom Dacre, a boy who is upset because he has to have his head shaved.

Beginning of the Modern Novels

- The first modern novel has generally been ascribed to a series of picaresque novels, most famously **Don Quixote** (1605) by **Miguel de Cervantes**.
- Later candidates to the title "modern novel" include
- **Pamela** (1740) by **Richardson**
- **Jacques the Fatalist** (1796) by **Denis Diderot** and so on.
- These novels are also called the first psychological novels.

Daniel Defoe

- Defoe was born in London about 1660.
- The son of James Foe, a butcher.
- An English trader, writer, journalist and pamphleteer and spy.
- Most famous for his novel "Robinson Crusoe" which is second only to the Bible in its number of translation.
- Defoe's influence in helping to shape modern journalism and modern every-day English style was large; but the achievement which has given him world-wide fame came late in life.
- In 1706 he had written a masterly short story.

Daniel Defoe

- In style, like Defoe's other writings, it is straightforward and clear, though colloquially informal, with an entire absence of pretense or affectation.
- Structurally, it is a characteristic story of adventure—a series of loosely connected experiences not unified into an organic plot, and with no stress on character and little treatment of the really complex relations and struggles between opposing characters and groups of characters.
- Yet it certainly marks a step in the development of the modern novel, as will be indicated in the proper place

Robinson Crusoe

- First published : 1719
- Main Characters: Robinson Crusoe ,a sailor ,a merchant , a plantation owner, a 28 year isolation on a desert island Friday (servant) and a slave trader, narrator .
- Robinson Crusoe by Daniel Defoe is a novel in which the protagonist tells about his life as an adventurer making it an autobiographical novel. Robinson Crusoe while young desires to travel abroad but his idea is condemned by his parents. However, he ignores their advice and boards a ship that takes him to London.

A Brief Analysis of Robinson Crusoe :

- **Story:**
- It is about Alexander Selkirk who once stayed alone on the uninhabited island Juan Fernandez for 5 years.
- **Different levels of meaning:**
- 1: Adventurous story
- 2: Moral tale
- 3: Commercial account
- 4: Puritan fable
- Myth of modern civilisation
- **Theme:**
- The first theme in the book is one of survival. In his experience being shipwrecked, Crusoe must think about what is absolutely necessary for physical survival. The theme of survival leads to a second theme, which is awareness that in our lives in civilization we constantly long for many things we do not actually need.

Features of his Novels

- 1: Picaresque tradition
- 2: Autobiographical form and first person narration
- 3: Journalistic tradition
- 4: Diction: plain, smooth, easy, direct, and colloquial but never coarse
- 5: Individualism.
- 6: Economic motivation.
- 7: Central idea: man is good and noble by nature but may succumb to an evil social environment.
- 8: The writer wants to make it clear that society is the source of various crimes and vices.

Jonathan swift

- Jonathan Swift (30 November 1667 – 19 October 1745) was an Anglo-Irish[1] satirist, essayist, political pamphleteer (first for the Whigs, then for the Tories), poet and cleric who became Dean of St Patrick's Cathedral, Dublin.
- His life was unhappy and miserable. He died of a brain disease in 1745.
- Enjoyed the reputation of 18th century greatest prose writer satires.
- 'A Tale of Tub' (a poem that ridicules the extravagances of religion , literature and academia)
- 'The Battle of the Books' (a mock debate between ancient and modern authors)

Jonathan Swift

- Masterpiece :
- **Gulliver's travels.(1726)**
- Part 1: Lilliput
- Part 2: Brobdingnag
- Part 3: Laputa
- Part 4: Houyhnhnms
- **A Tale of Tub:**
- It attacked religious ideas, and annoyed a large number of readers.
- **The Battle of Books:**
- The Battle of the Books is a simple mock-heroic account of a battle among the books resting in the King's Library at St. James's Palace. The battle itself is a satirical allegory on an intellectual debate that had been ranging in England since 1692, sometimes called the Battle of the Ancients and the Moderns

Major Events of the 18th century:

- There were three major events that took place in the 18th century. These are as follows:
- The American revolution
- The French revolution and
- The Industrial revolution (age of Enlightenment)

The American Revolution

- The American revolution was a colonial revolt which occurred between 1765 and 1783.
- The American Patriots in the thirteen colonies defeated the Britain in the American Revolutionary War with the assistance of France, winning independence from Great Britain and establishing the

The French Revolution

- The french revolution was a period of time in French when the people overthrew the monarchy and took control of the government.
- It lasted 10 years from 1789 to 1799.
- It began on july 14, 1789 when revolutionaries stormed a prison called Bastille.

Causes of French Revolution :

- Political conflict: conflict between monarchy and nobility over the “reform” of the tax system led to paralysis and bankruptcy.
- Social inequality in France due to the Estates System.
- Tax Burden on the third Estate.
- The rise of the Bourgeoisie.
- Ideas put forward by Enlightenment philosophers.
- Financial Crisis caused due to Costly Wars.

Industrial Revolution :

- Also known as First Industrial Revolution.
- Began in the 18th century from about 1760 to sometime between 1820 and 1840, when agricultural societies became more industrialized and urban.
- Revolution transformed economies that had been based on agriculture and handicraft into economies based on large-scale industry, mechanized manufacturing, and the factory system.
- New machines, new power sources, and new ways of organizing work made existing industries more productive and efficient.

