

## Reading List (for Task 1)

### **The Gothic**

The Strange Case Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde – *Robert Louis Stevenson*

Wuthering Heights – *Emily Bronte*

Jane Eyre – *Charlotte Bronte*

Castle of Otranto - *Horace Walpole*

The Wasp Factory – *Iain Banks*

Carrie – *Stephen King*

The Woman in Black – *Susan Hill*

The Classic Horror Stories - *HP Lovecraft*

The Raven - *Edgar Allan Poe*

### **Victorian Literature**

Great Expectations – *Charles Dickens*

Tess of the D'Urbervilles – *Thomas Hardy*

Short Stories – *DH Lawrence*

North and South – *Elizabeth Gaskell*

### **To compliment the study of Shakespeare's The Tempest**

Hagseed – *Margret Atwood*

Dr Faustus – *Christopher Marlowe*

Volpone – *Ben Jonson*

Wide Sargasso Sea – *Jean Rhys*

The Color Purple – *Alice Walker*

### **Post-Modernist Literature**

Autumn – *Ali Smith*

If Nobody speaks of Remarkable Things – *Jon McGregor*

The Handmaid's Tale – *Margaret Atwood*

The Catcher in the Rye - *J D Salinger*

Catch 22 – *Joseph Heller*

### **Non-Fiction / Conflict Writing**

Bill Bryson – *Notes from a small Island*

Ernest Hemingway – *The Dangerous Summer*

Barack Obama – *The Audacity of Hope*

Laurie Lee - *As I Walked Out One Midsummer Morning*

### **Fantasy**

The Lord of the Rings (series) – *JRR Tolkien*

His Dark Materials (series) – *Phillip Pullman*

The Chronicles of Narnia (Series) – *C S Lewis*

Mort – *Terry Pratchett*

Song of Fire and Ice – *George RR Martin*

Watchmen – *Alan Moore*

## Literary Eras (for Tasks 2 and 3)

### The Renaissance

Years: 1485-1660

*The Elizabethan Period: the reign of Elizabeth I, 1586-1603*

*Jacobean Period: the reign of James I of England, 1603-1625*

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

#### *Effect:*

- commoners welcomed at some play productions (like ones at the Globe) while conservatives try to close the theatres on grounds that they promote brazen behaviours
- 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

#### *A Sampling of Key Literature & Authors:*

William Shakespeare

Thomas Wyatt

Ben Jonson

Cavalier Poets

Metaphysical Poets

John Donne

Christopher Marlowe

Andrew Marvell

Robert Herrick

Katherine Phillips

# The Neoclassical Period

Years: 1660-1798

*The Restoration: the reign of Charles II, 1630 - 1660 (after his restoration to the throne in 1630 following the English Civil War and Cromwell)*

*The Age of Enlightenment (the Eighteenth Century)*

## *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
- poetry
- essays
- letters, diaries, biographies
- novels

## *Effect:*

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

## *Historical Context:*

- 50% of males 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 Authors:*

Alexander Pope  
Daniel Defoe  
Jonathan Swift  
Samuel Johnson  
John Bunyan

John Milton

# The Romantic Period

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 man-made 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
- Tory philosophy that government should NOT interfere with private enterprise
- middle class gains representation in the British parliament
- railroads begin to run

## *Key Authors:*

Jane Austen  
Mary Shelley  
Robert Burns  
William Blake  
William Wordsworth  
Samuel Taylor Coleridge  
Lord Byron  
Percy Shelley  
John Keats

# The Victorian Period

Years: 1832-1900

## *Content:*

- conflict between those in power and the common masses of labourers and the poor
- shocking life of workhouses 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
- political novels
- detective novels (Sherlock Holmes)
- serialized novels (Charles Dickens)
- 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 Authors:*

Charles Dickens  
Rudyard Kipling  
George Eliot  
Alfred Lord Tennyson  
Charlotte Bronte

Thomas Hardy  
Robert Louis Stevenson  
Oscar Wilde  
Charles Darwin  
Robert Browning

# The Modern Period

Years: 1900-(subject to debate)

## *Content:*

- Breakdown of social norms
- Realistic embodiment of social meanings
- Separation of meanings and senses from the context
- Despairing individual behaviours in the face of an unmanageable future
- Spiritual loneliness
- Alienation
- Frustration when reading the text
- Disillusionment
- Rejection of history
- Rejection of outdated social systems
- Objection to traditional thoughts and traditional moralities
- Objection to religious thoughts
- Substitution of a mythical past
- Two World Wars' effects on humanity

## *Genres/Styles:*

- poetry: free verse
- epiphanies begin to appear in literature
- speeches
- memoirs
- novels
- stream of consciousness

## *Effect:*

- Literature attempts to search for 'truths' and discover the deep ideas and meanings behind

## *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 Authors:*

James Joyce	Virginia Woolf
T. S. Eliot	Joseph Conrad
D. H. Lawrence	Graham Greene
Dylan Thomas	George Orwell
William Butler Yeats	Bernard Shaw

# The Post Modern Period

## Years: 1945(ish) – present

It is very difficult to determine the exact beginning or evolution of modernism into the realm of postmodernism. It is a general assumption that postmodernism started after WW2 in a time of great social, political and cultural upheaval. What is important is the term postmodernism is revealing in the sense that it is not a new movement, devoid of links with modernism but a reaction to it. Below is a list of characteristics displayed within post-modern literature, all of which are contrasted to modern literature.

1. Whereas Modernism places faith in the ideas, values, beliefs, culture, and norms of the West, Postmodernism rejects Western values and beliefs as only a small part of the human experience and often rejects such ideas, beliefs, culture, and norms.
2. Whereas Modernism attempts to reveal profound truths of experience and life, Postmodernism is suspicious of being "profound" because such ideas are based on one particular Western value systems.
3. Whereas Modernism attempts to find depth and interior meaning beneath the surface of objects and events, Postmodernism prefers to dwell on the exterior image and avoids drawing conclusions or suggesting underlying meanings associated with the interior of objects and events.
4. Whereas Modernism focused on central themes and a united vision in a particular piece of literature, Postmodernism sees human experience as unstable, internally contradictory, ambiguous, inconclusive, indeterminate, unfinished, fragmented, discontinuous, "jagged," with no one specific reality possible. Therefore, it focuses on a vision of a contradictory, fragmented, ambiguous, indeterminate, unfinished, "jagged" world.
5. Whereas Modern authors guide and control the reader's response to their work, the Postmodern writer creates an "open" work in which the reader must supply his own connections, work out alternative meanings, and provide his own (unguided) interpretation.

### *A Sampling of Key Authors:*

Margaret Atwood  
Jean Baudrillard  
William S. Burroughs  
Bret Easton Ellis  
Jack Kerouac  
George Orwell  
Tom Stoppard  
Kurt Vonnegut

Martin Amis  
Jorge Louis Borges  
Albert Camus  
Gabriel García Márquez  
Vladimir Nabokov  
Sylvia Plath  
Salman Rushdie  
Jeanette Winterson