



English Through Time



Key Historical Periods

English Language

- 450 – 1150 AD: **Old English**
- 1150 – 1500 AD: **Middle English**
- 1500-1700/1800 AD: **Early Modern English**
- 1800 – present day: **Late Modern English**

English Literature

Ancient world

- The period before Christ (BC).
- Covers the era of the Bible, Ancient Egypt, Ancient Greece and Ancient Rome.

The Middle Ages (Old and Middle English)

- 500-1400AD
- A period of great change in Great Britain as the Roman empire falls and settlers from Europe invade and settle.

Renaissance (Early Modern English)

- 1500-1650
- Means 'rebirth'
- Began in Italy in 14th Century
- Huge developments in science and technology
- A focus of nature and love in literature
- The idea of the 'perfect woman' was popular
- The introduction of the printing press in 1439 meant that books could be mass-produced and led to standardised spelling.

Victorian Era (Late Modern English)

- 1837 – 1901
- Britain is industrialised meaning production is much more efficient.
- Britain is wealthy due to the control of a large empire
- However, life is bleak and harsh for the poor

20th Century (Late Modern English)

- 1900-1999
- Classed as the modern age

Context – Women in Literature

Throughout history, society has been led by men, with women fulfilling the roles of wife, mother and home-maker for thousands of years. Changes to gender roles have been fairly recent events.

- 1558:** Elizabeth I becomes first English queen to rule in her own right.
- 1736:** women are legally declared to be property of their husband.
- 1840:** it is declared lawful for a man to beat & imprison his wife.
- 1868:** women voting was declared illegal.
- 1870:** women were permitted to keep their own money & property after marriage.
- 1876:** women permitted to attend university.
- 1890:** some women allowed to vote in local elections.
- 1918:** women aged over 30 allowed to vote in general elections.
- 1944:** female teachers were allowed to keep their jobs after they married.
- 1970:** becomes law that men & women be paid the same for the same job.
- 1975:** becomes illegal to discriminate based on gender.
- 1979:** Margaret Thatcher becomes the first ever female Prime Minister
- 1994:** the first female priests were ordained into the Church of England.
- 1998:** The Human Rights Act grants full legal equality to all UK citizens

Literature - Texts & Authors

The Bible

- A collection of religious writings produced over several hundred years by various authors.

The Iliad

- 1260–1180 BC
- An epic poem about the Trojan War
- Written by **Homer**

Metamorphoses

- 8AD
- Collection of stories from Greek mythology
- Written by **Ovid**

Beowulf

- 700-100AD
- An epic poem
- Author is unknown

The Canterbury Tales

- 1387-1400
- A collection of stories told by a group of pilgrims travelling to Canterbury.
- Written by **Geoffrey Chaucer**

The Faerie Queen

- 1590
- An epic poem
- Written by **Edmund Spenser**

Macbeth

- 1606
- A play by **William Shakespeare**.

Great Expectations

- 1861
- A novel by **Charles Dickens**

Invaders

- Romans** – occupied Britain from 43-410 AD
- Angles, Saxons, Jutes** – tribes from Germany who invaded and settled in Britain during the 5th century. The Angles are the origin of the word England .
- Vikings** – groups from Scandinavia (Sweden, Norway, Denmark, etc) who invaded and settled in Britain during the 8th century
- Normans** – invaders from France who settled in Britain from 1066 onwards

Key vocabulary - Language

- Etymology** – the study of the origin of words and the way in which their meanings have changed throughout history.
- Standardisation** – an agreed standard or way of doing something
- Phoneme** – The smallest unit of sound
- Morpheme** – the smallest unit of meaning
- Homonym** – two or more words having the same spelling but different meanings and origins.
- Homophone** – two or more words having the same pronunciation but different meanings, origins, or spelling.
- Root word** – a stem word which can be used to create new words by adding a prefix or suffix.
- Prefix** – a collection of letters added before a stem word
- Suffix** – a collection of letters added after a stem word
- Idiom** – A figure of speech specific to a language whose meaning is different to the literal meaning of the words in the phrase.
- Euphemism** – using a mild or indirect word or phrase instead of a more harsh or blunt one when referring to something unpleasant or embarrassing.

Key vocabulary - Literature

- Genesis:** literally means 'the beginning or moment of creation'. The name of the first book of The Bible.
- Renaissance:** literally 're-birth'. The period of development in science and technology in the 16th Century
- Medieval** – Relating to the middle ages
- Patriarchy:** a society in which all power and decision-making lies with men.
- Masculinity** – Having qualities that are seen as characteristic of men
- Femininity** – Having qualities that are seen as characteristic of women
- Chivalry:** code of behaviour followed by Medieval knights. Promoted honour, duty, loyalty & brotherhood.
- Courtly love:** the selfless devotion, respect and assistance displayed by knights towards women
- Epic** – A lengthy narrative poem that tells the story of extraordinary events
- Mythology** – the study of a collection of stories from the ancient world; key characters include heroes, gods and monsters