



British Literature

Literature Study Guide Version 3.1

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Authors are listed roughly chronologically by the publication of their listed works.

Old English and Middle English (to about 1400)

Answer	Major Works	Details
[unknown]	Beowulf	Old English epic poem about a Geatish warrior (from a region of what is now Sweden) who, as a young man, helps Hrothgar defend his mead-hall, Heorot , by killing Grendel and Grendel's mother ; when he is an old man, Beowulf is aided by Wiglaf in killing a dragon
"Pearl Poet"	Sir Gawain and the Green Knight The Pearl	Old English
Geoffrey Chaucer	The Canterbury Tales	Middle English collection of short stories written in poetic form; in it, a group of pilgrims going to the shrine of Thomas Beckett in Canterbury stop at the Tabard Inn to rest and tell each other stories; the pilgrims include the Wife of Bath , the Miller , and the Knight

Elizabethan Era / English Renaissance (late 1500s-early 1600s)

Answer	Major Works	Details
Christopher Marlowe	The Jew of Malta Doctor Faustus Tamburlaine "The Passionate Shepherd to His Love"	Marlowe was a playwright and poet; <i>The Jew of Malta</i> is about Barabas and his daughter Abigail ; <i>Doctor Faustus</i> is one of many retellings of the Faust myth in which the title man sells his soul to Mephistopheles for power; "The Passionate Shepherd to His Love" is a poem that begins, " Come live with me and be my love "
Edmund Spenser	The Faerie Queene	
William Shakespeare	Romeo and Juliet Macbeth King Lear Hamlet Julius Caesar The Merchant of Venice The Tempest Twelfth Night The Taming of the Shrew "Shall I compare thee to a summer's day" "My mistress' eyes are nothing like the sun"	Shakespeare was a playwright and poet; for details of his plays, see RQBCo's dedicated "Shakespeare's Plays" study guide; his poems are Elizabethan sonnets , and were often dedicated to a " Dark Lady " and to a male " Fair Youth "
John Donne	The Holy Sonnets "The Flea" "A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning"	<i>The Holy Sonnets</i> includes the poem " Death be not proud "
Ben Jonson	Volpone The Alchemist	plays

Carpe Diem Poems (mid-1600s)

"Carpe diem" poems encourage their subjects and the reader to "seize the day"

Answer	Major Works	Details
Robert <u>Herrick</u>	"To the Virgins, to Make Much of Time"	Herrick was a Cavalier Poet; the poem begins, " Gather ye rosebuds while ye may "
Andrew <u>Marvell</u>	"To His Coy Mistress"	poem that begins, " Had we but World enough, and Time "

Restoration Era (1660s-1680s)

Answer	Major Works	Details
John <u>Milton</u>	Paradise Lost "On His Blindness" Lycidas	Milton was a poet who lost his sight later in life; <i>Paradise Lost</i> is an epic poem in which Lucifer rebels against God and is cast out with the rest of the fallen angels-turned-demons, declaring it is " better to reign in Hell than serve in Heaven "; "On His Blindness" is also called " When I consider how my light is spent "
John <u>Bunyan</u>	The Pilgrim's Progress	
Alexander <u>Pope</u>	The Rape of the Lock	

Writers of the 1700s

Answer	Major Works	Details
Daniel <u>Defoe</u>	Robinson Crusoe Moll Flanders A Journal of the Plague Year	Robinson Crusoe survives on a deserted island after being shipwrecked, and eventually meets a man he names Friday
Jonathan <u>Swift</u>	Gulliver's Travels A Modest Proposal A Tale of a Tub	Most of Swift's works are satire ; <i>Gulliver's Travels</i> is about Lemuel Gulliver , a ship's doctor who travels to fictional lands like Lilliput and Brobdingnag

Romantic Poets (1790s-1830s)

For more information, see the RQBCo's British Romantic Poets study guide

Answer	Major Works	Details
Robert <u>Burns</u>	"To a Mouse" "Auld Lang Syne" "A Red, Red Rose"	Burns was a Scottish poet who usually wrote out his poem in Scots English
William <u>Blake</u>	"The Tyger" "The Chimney Sweeper"	"The Tyger" includes the lines " Tyger Tyger, burning bright, / in the forests of the night " and was part of Blake's collection <i>Songs of Experience</i> ; he also wrote the collection <i>Songs of Innocence</i>
John <u>Keats</u>	"Ode on a Grecian Urn" "Ode to a Nightingale"	Keats died young of tuberculosis ; "Ode on a Grecian Urn" concludes that " beauty is truth, truth beauty "
Lord <u>Byron</u>	"She Walks in Beauty" Don Juan Childe Harold's Pilgrimage	

Romantic Poets (1790s-1830s), continued

For more information, see the RQBCo's British Romantic Poets study guide

Answer	Major Works	Details
Samuel Taylor Coleridge	The Rime of the Ancient Mariner "Kubla Khan"	wrote <i>Lyrical Ballads</i> with Wordsworth
Percy Bysshe Shelley	"Ozymandias" "To a Skylark"	husband of Mary Shelley
William Wordsworth	"Daffodils" "Tintern Abbey"	wrote <i>Lyrical Ballads</i> with Coleridge; "Daffodils" is also titled " I wandered lonely as a cloud "

Writers of the Early 1800s

Answer	Major Works	Details
Jane Austen	Pride and Prejudice Sense and Sensibility Emma	author of "manners novels;" <i>Pride and Prejudice</i> is about Elizabeth Bennet and Fitzwilliam Darcy , who overcome their prejudice about each other to fall in love
Mary Shelley	Frankenstein	<i>Frankenstein</i> includes the title character Victor Frankenstein, as well as Elizabeth Lavenza , and Henry Clerval
Sir Walter Scott	Ivanhoe	<i>Ivanhoe</i> is one of Scott's historical fiction Waverley novels

Victorian Era (1830s-early 1900s)

Answer	Major Works	Details
Alfred, Lord Tennyson	"The Charge of the Light Brigade" "In Memoriam A.H.H." "The Lady of Shalott" "Crossing the Bar"	poetry
Charles Dickens	A Christmas Carol Oliver Twist Great Expectations David Copperfield A Tale of Two Cities	<i>A Christmas Carol</i> is about Ebenezer Scrooge , who learns to be generous to his employee Bob Cratchitt and Bob's son Tiny Tim ; <i>Oliver Twist</i> includes the characters Fagin , Bill Sikes , and the Artful Dodger ; <i>Great Expectations</i> is about Pip , Estella , Miss Havisham , and Abel Magwitch ; <i>A Tale of Two Cities</i> is about London and Paris during the French Revolution
Robert Browning	"My Last Duchess"	poet and husband of Elizabeth Barrett Browning
Charlotte Brontë	Jane Eyre	sister of Emily and Anne Brontë; wrote under the pen name Curer Bell; characters in <i>Jane Eyre</i> include Jane Eyre, Edward Rochester, Bertha Mason, Helen Burns, and Grace Poole
Emily Brontë	Wuthering Heights	sister of Charlotte and Anne Brontë; wrote under the pen name Ellis Bell; characters in <i>Wuthering Heights</i> include Heathcliff , Catherine , Hindley , Hareton Earnshaw , and Ellen " Nelly " Dean , who all live at the title house and the nearby house, called Thrushcross Grange
William Makepeace Thackeray	Vanity Fair	
George Eliot	Middlemarch The Mill on the Floss	pen name of Mary Ann Evans

Victorian Era (1830s-early 1900s), continued

Answer	Major Works	Details
Elizabeth Barrett Browning	"How do I Love Thee? Let Me Count the Ways"	poet and wife of Robert Browning; "How do I love thee?" is collected in <i>Sonnets from the Portuguese</i>
Lewis Carroll	Alice's Adventures in Wonderland	
Matthew Arnold	"Dover Beach"	
Robert Louis Stevenson	Treasure Island The Strange Case of Doctor Jekyll and Mister Hyde	
Oscar Wilde	The Importance of Being Earnest Lady Windermere's Fan The Picture of Dorian Gray	primarily known as a playwright; <i>The Importance of Being Earnest</i> includes the characters Algernon Moncrief and Jack Worthing ; <i>The Picture of Dorian Gray</i> is a novel in which the title man stays young while his portrait, painted by Basil Hallward , grows old and corrupted
Rudyard Kipling	The Jungle Book	collection of children's short stories set in rural India during the British occupation
H.G. Wells	The Time Machine The War of the Worlds The Invisible Man	early science fiction novels
A.E. Housman	A Shropshire Lad	poetry collection that includes "To an Athlete Dying Young"
Bram Stoker	Dracula	
Joseph Conrad	Heart of Darkness	
Thomas Hardy	Tess of the d'Urbervilles Jude the Obscure The Mayor of Casterbridge The Return of the Native Far from the Madding Crowd "The Convergence of the Twain" "The Darkling Thrush"	set many of his novels in the fictional county of Wessex ; in <i>Tess of the d'Urbervilles</i> , Tess Durbeyfield is assaulted by Alec and gives birth to a boy named Sorrow , dooming her love for Angel Clare ; in <i>Jude the Obscure</i> , Jude has failed relationships with Arabella Donn and his cousin, Sue Bridehead ; "The Convergence of the Twain" is a poem about the <i>Titanic</i> disaster
Sir Arthur Conan Doyle	A Study in Scarlet The Hound of the Baskervilles	the listed works are two of Doyle's many stories about Sherlock Holmes

Twentieth Century

Answer	Major Works	Details
George Bernard Shaw	Pygmalion Man and Superman Major Barbara	plays; <i>Pygmalion</i> is the basis for the film <i>My Fair Lady</i>
E.M. Forster	A Passage to India Howards End A Room with a View	
James Joyce	Dubliners Ulysses A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man	<i>Dubliners</i> is a collection of short stories including "Araby" and "The Dead"

Twentieth Century, continued

Answer	Major Works	Details
T.S. <u>Eliot</u>	The Waste Land "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" The Hollow Men	poetry; <i>The Waste Land</i> is a long poem that begins, " April is the cruelest month "
D.H. <u>Lawrence</u>	Lady Chatterley's Lover Sons and Lovers	
Wilfred <u>Owen</u>	"Dulce et Decorum Est"	poem
Virginia <u>Woolf</u>	To The Lighthouse Mrs Dalloway Orlando "A Room of One's Own"	"A Room of One's Own" is a feminist essay in which Woolf says women must have a steady income and a room set aside for their work to be able to write professionally
William Butler <u>Yeats</u>	"The Second Coming" "Sailing to Byzantium" "Easter, 1916"	poetry
Aldous <u>Huxley</u>	Brave New World	
Agatha <u>Christie</u>	Murder on the Orient Express	Christie was the " Queen of Crime " who wrote books about detectives like Hercule Poirot and Miss Marple
Daphne <u>du Maurier</u>	Rebecca "The Birds"	
George <u>Orwell</u>	Nineteen Eighty-Four Animal Farm	pen name of Eric Arthur Blair ; characters in <i>1984</i> include Winston Smith , Julia , Big Brother , O'Brien , and Mr Charrington ; <i>Animal Farm</i> includes the pigs Snowball and Napoleon and the horse Boxer
C.S. <u>Lewis</u>	The Chronicles of Narnia	series of children's novels beginning with <i>The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe</i>
Dylan <u>Thomas</u>	"Do not go gentle into that good night"	poetry; a villanelle asking Thomas's father not to give in to death
William <u>Golding</u>	Lord of the Flies	novel about children stranded on a deserted island, including Ralph , Jack , Simon , and Piggy
Anthony <u>Burgess</u>	A Clockwork Orange	
Kazuo <u>Ishiguro</u>	The Remains of the Day Never Let Me Go	

Theater of the Absurd / Absurdism (Twentieth Century)

Playwrights whose works are characterized by strange situations and existentialist themes

Answer	Major Works	Details
Samuel <u>Beckett</u>	Waiting for Godot	
Harold <u>Pinter</u>	The Dumb Waiter The Birthday Party	
Tom <u>Stoppard</u>	Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead Arcadia	