

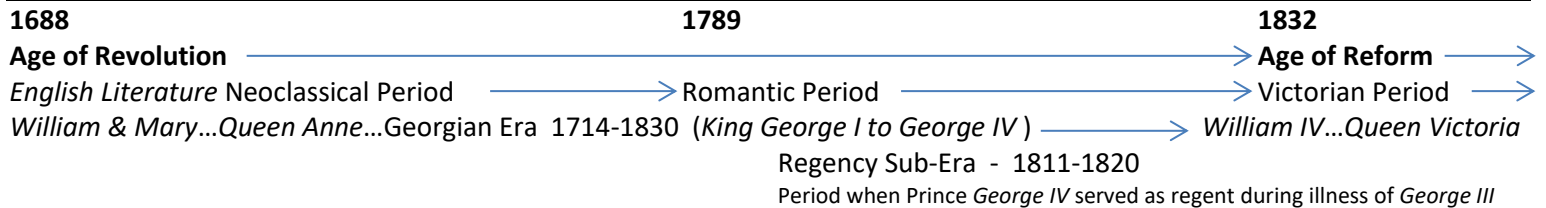
British Literature Lecture

Neoclassical Period 1688-1789



Neoclassical Period was the first half of the Age of Revolution in England
Age of Revolution - 1688-1832

- ❖ Neoclassical Period - 1688-1789
 - From the Glorious Revolution of 1688 (beginning of the reign of William & Mary)
 - To the end of the American Revolution
- ❖ Romantic Period - 1789-1832



Features of Neoclassicism

- Reason & Rationalism & Realism** – counter-emphasis on feeling
- Qualities of **Clarity, Simplicity, Smoothness, & Polish**
- Poetic Decorum – stay within bounds of what was **Conventional** and expected
- Didacticism**- teaching & instruction within a work of literature
- Satire**- a work of literature designed to correct an evil by means of ridicule
- Heroic Couplet** – a pair of rhymed lines in iambic pentameter



England's Historic Timeline of Neoclassical Era

King William III and Mary II ruled England 1688-1702

- Mary II was Protestant daughter of Catholic James II
- The Glorious Revolution brought them to the throne!
- Protestantism restored under William & Mary



Queen Anne ruled England 1702-1714

- Protestant sister of Mary II and daughter of Catholic James II
- Continued Protestantism in England
- "The Church of Rome is wicked and dangerous", she wrote to her sister, "their ceremonies – most of them – plain downright idolatry."
- 5 children: 4 died before age 2 and 1 died at age 11
- Throne went to cousin George from Germany
- "Queen Anne" now refers to a particular architectural style and furniture style!



George I ruled England 1714-1727

- Grew up in Germany
- Jacobite Rebellion sought to put an alternate (Catholic) heir on the throne
- Not popular – the British perceived him as too German – only used English in written documents

George II ruled England 1727-1760

- Also grew up in Germany – came to England upon father's accession
- Loved England! Loved public attention! Became popular with the people
- Happily married to Catherine – he was allowed to choose his wife
- Did not get along well with his dad King George I
- Another Jacobite Rebellion attempted by Bonnie Prince Charlie - defeated at Battle of Culloden
- Died at age 77 - not survived by any of his sons – throne went to his grandson



George III ruled England 1760-1820

- Grandson of George II – son of Frederick
- Became king at age 22 – rushed to find a wife & marry before coronation
- Happily married even though he met his wife on their wedding day 15 children!
- Very devout – spent hours in prayer each day
- The English king during the **American Revolution!** :-D
- Ruled during the conflicts with France after French Revolution (1789) and Napoleonic Wars (1803-1815)
- Oft remembered as “The Mad King”
- Suffered from a mysterious mental illness
- Samples of his hair studied in 2005 revealed high levels of arsenic, possible trigger for the disease
- Bad bout of the disease from 1788-1789 / Afflicted again in 1804 for several months
- By end of 1811, George III had become permanently insane - lived in seclusion at Windsor Castle until his death.
- Son George IV ruled as regent from 1811 due to George III’s mental illness
- George was succeeded by two of his sons George IV and William IV - both died without children, leaving the throne to niece **Victoria** - last monarch of the House of Hanover! :-D
- George III lived for 81 years and 239 days and reigned for 59 years and 96 days - Only Queen Victoria and Elizabeth II lived and reigned longer.
- The Declaration of Independence's wording has contributed to the American public's perception of George as a tyrant.



This Chapter’s Authors

JONATHAN SWIFT

Gulliver’s Travels

- His cause – the advancement of reason
- Worked as parish priest in Ireland
- Dean of St. Patrick’s Cathedral in Dublin
- Offended Queen Anne with coarseness of his satire
- Wrote biting IRONIC Pamphlets such as *A Modest Proposal for Preventing the Children of Poor People from Being a Burden to Their Parents or Country*



Jonathan Swift



Daniel Defoe

DANIEL DEFOE

Robinson Crusoe

- Began career as Daniel Foe, a hoosier
- Ironic pamphlet landed him in the pillory, but he was applauded by crowds!
- *Robinson Crusoe* – 1719 – an allegory of his life
- Fathered genre of fictional travelogue using style of journalistic realism

SAMUEL JOHNSON

The Rambler

Lives of the English Poets

A Letter to a Young Clergyman

Dictionary of the English Language

- Attended Oxford but did not get a degree
- Aimless until married a widow who set him up to run a school
- Co-Founded The Literary Club (group of thinkers and writers)
- John Wesley visited him a great deal in his later years



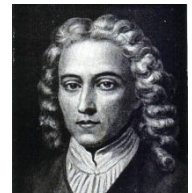
Samuel Johnson

ALEXANDER POPE

Essay on Man

Essay on Criticism

- Poet
- Master of Heroic Couplet
- Master of Didacticism



Alexander Pope

THOMAS GRAY

Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard

- Educated at Eton & Cambridge
- Poems of somber reflection
- Regarded best of mid-century poets



Thomas Gray



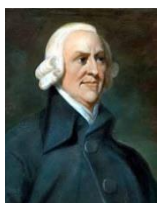
James Boswell

JAMES BOSWELL

The Life of Samuel Johnson, LLD

- Scottish lord
- Lawyer
- Friend of Samuel Johnson-wrote his biography with eye for detail

Adam Smith



ADAM SMITH

Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations



John Locke

JOHN LOCKE

Essay on Human Understanding *Two Treatises on Government*

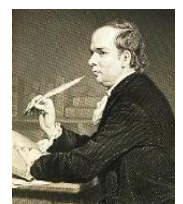
OLIVER GOLDSMITH

She Stoops to Conquer

The Vicar of Wakefield

The Deserted Village

- ❖ Literary protégé of Samuel Johnson
- ❖ Achieved excellence in four genres: Essay, Novel, Drama (satirical comedy), formal Poem of serious reflection
- ❖ *Vicar of Wakefield* satirizes English social behavior of the day
- ❖ *She Stoops to Conquer* – a comedy of manners
- ❖ *She Stoops* was staged by David Garrick at the Drury Lane Theatre in London



Oliver Goldsmith

EDWARD GIBBON

The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire



Edward Gibbon