

19th Century Literature (1799 to 1900)

The 19th-century literature is merged with three ages. They are:

- Romanticism (1798-1837)
- Victorian Age (1837-1901)
- Edwardian Age (1901-1910)

Romanticism (1798-1837) - This period was mainly a reaction against the philosophy of Enlightenment period that dominated much of European Philosophy. Individual achievements are highly valued. Many of the Romantic writers believed that people regardless of wealth or social class must be able to appreciate art and literature.

Some of the most famous poets of the period are - John Keats, William Blake, William Wordsworth, Thomas Grey etc. The works were basically on the depiction of nature. They used personification frequently in the poems. The poets basically tried to bring out their inner feelings.

Victorian Age (1837-1901) - The Victorian era was one of the most important eras in the History of English Literature. Queen Victoria, at the age of 18 ruled England continuously for 64 years until her death. It is one of the longest reigns in the history of England. Many important social and historical changes altered the structure of the nation. The population of the country almost doubled. The British empire expanded exponentially. Technology and industrial progress helped Britain to be one of the most dominant countries in the world.

The Victorian age was a time of great prosperity in the History of English Literature. This period made a lot of changes amongst people. The lower-class became more self-conscious but on the other hand, the middle-class people got more power in them. The rich became vulnerable in the society. Just like the Elizabethan England, The Victorian England saw a great expansion of prosperity, prestige, and culture. Some of the most trending topics of that time are the democracy, feminism, unionization of workers, Marxism, socialism etc.

Due to the industrial revolution, the country saw progress and growth. But along with that poverty and exploitation was also a part of it. The

poor were hired for industrial labor at a very low rate.

The Victorian period was a time of contradiction, often referred to as the Victorian Compromise. There were differences between science and religion. Various conflicts arose due to these differences. Secondly, the gap between the rich and the poor widened drastically. The poor started becoming poorer and the rich started becoming richer. The wealthy or the rich people hired the labors at a very cheap rate.

The Victorian novels depicted almost every perspective of nineteenth-century Victorian life. Though poetry and prose were unquestionably brilliant, it was the novel that conclusively proved to be the Victorians' special literary success. Charles Dickens, *Great Expectations*, and *David Copperfield* are some of the most prominent authors.

Charles Darwin wrote *Origin of the Species* which caused full-scale controversy in Europe. Darwin in his book wrote that the species survive and evolve by natural selection, or in other words, it's the survival of the fittest. This led to a debate among the Victorian people which also led to the alteration of their intellectual and religious life. Another most popular author of the period under consideration was Lord Alfred Tennyson. He wrote *In Memoriam* which talks about the reflection on the death of his friend.

The Edwardian Age (1901-1910) - After the death of Queen Victoria, Edward VII came into the throne. His throne at England is known as the Edwardian age. It lasted less than a decade. Even though Queen Victoria, a lady was on the throne for the last 64 years, she was unable to do something for the upliftment of women. But in this era, the women's status in the society seem to increase. Science and technology were also developed. Wright brothers invented the first airplane during that time.

H.G Wells, Beatrix Potter, Lucy Maud Montgomery, Edith Nesbit were some of the renowned writers of the age.