

Neo-Classical Age (1660-1798)

The word 'Neo-Classical' is merged with the two words 'Neo' and 'Classical'. Neo implies 'new' and classical denotes the 'Roman and Greek classics'.

This era is also known as the era of enlightenment. People in England would meet at the coffee house and talk about productive things. It started the British tradition of 'afternoon tea'. Popular types of literature include parody, letters, essays, and satire.

People were interested in appearance, not in the being genuine. Having good manners and doing the right thing to the public was essential.

This age is divided into three parts:

- Restoration Period
- Augustan Literature &
- Age of Sensibility

Restoration Period (1660-1700) - The restoration age begins in 1660. In the restoration period, James II was restored to the throne. There was a complete rejection of ideas. People had a different way of living as compared to the other ages. A lot of changes took place during that period.

Monarchy was restored in England. James II, brother of Charles I who was defeated and beheaded returned to England from France. He became the king there.

Most importantly, the Theatre closed down by the Puritans was restored. John Dryden, greatest of all the poets of this age, established heroic couplet in English Poetry. He developed a new prose style that was suited to the practical needs of the age.

Charles II and his followers enjoyed a gay life in France during the exile. Later, when he came to England, he demanded that drama should follow the French style of writing. Establishment of Royal Society, Development of science.

John Dryden's text, 'Absalom and Achitophel' talks about the religious and political conflict. The religious quarrel between the Protestants and the Catholics are also portrayed in his book.

There was the rise of the two political parties - the Whigs and the Tories. The Tories supported the king and the Whigs opposed it. Here are some of the chief characteristics of this period. This age was the beginning of modern prose.

Charles II wanted to establish Catholicism in the country. As the entire country was Protestant it leads to a conflict between the two. Charles II became infamous for this act. As a consequence, this led to a revolution which is known as the 'Bloodless Revolution'. It took place in 1688.

Augustan Literature - The Augustan age was a Roman Empire age. King Augustus was the emperor of that time. Some of the most famous Augustan writers are Virgil, Horace etc. Major poets of that age are Pope and Dryden. And on the other hand, Jonathan Swift was famous for his prose works.

This age is also known as classical age. The first half of the 18th century was marked by the preparation of Industrial revolution. The main social classes were merchants, landowners, and manufacturers. The condition of women was not satisfactory. Sexual harassment, abduction of women, forced marriage took place in the period. The politicians were corrupt too. This is the age of material greed.

John Dryden lived between the Restoration and Augustan age. He wrote various comedies. But the attribute for which he was highly admired was his verse satires. His followers and other small poets valued this writing style.

Alexander Pope was the biggest name of this period. He basically wrote on harmony. The heroic couplet is famous in his poems. One of his famous work is The Canterbury Tales.

Age of Sensibility (1750-1798)- The age of Sensibility is also known as the age of Johnson. Two most famous writers of this period are Richard Brinsley Sheridan and Oliver Goldsmith. Sheridan was a love poet. Most of the literary works of this age talk about human feelings, classicism and Romantic revival.

