LITERATURE OF THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

The Augustan Age or the Age of Pope

It was poet Oliver Goldsmith who first designated the early 18th century, as the Augustan Age. The age has also been called the Age of Pope. The Augustan age includes the age of Dryden and Pope. The restoration of Stuart monarchy in 1660 marked the beginning of the Augustan age.

Eighteenth century in England was an age equal to the age of Augustus Caesar, when the Roman society had reached the peak of its glory. The name Augustan Age was chosen by writers who saw in Pope, Addison, Swift, Johnson and Burke the modern parallels to Horace, Virgil and Cicero, and all that brilliant company who made Roman literature famous in the day of Augustus. Past ages of England were looked upon as barbarous, and the classics of Greece and Rome were regarded as models which men of taste were to follow.

Characteristics of the Augustan Age

The Classical Age

This period, in the first place, is called the classical age, because reason dominated emotion; social conventions became more important than individual convictions; form became more important than content. The term "classic" is applied to designate writing of the finest quality. According to Goethe, "Everything that is good in literature is classical." Every national literature has at least one period in which an unusual number of exceptional writers produce books of outstanding quality, and this is called the classical period of a nation's literature. The age of Queen Anne is often called the classical age of England. Addison, Swift, Richardson, Fielding, Goldsmith, Dr Johnson, Burke, Gibbon and Pope are the great luminaries of the age.

Rule of rules

The writers of this age were governed by set rules and principles. And, in this crazy adherence to rules the writers were deeply influenced by Boileau and Rapin, who insisted on precise methods of writing poetry and who professed to have discovered their rules in the works of Aristotle and Horace.

Age of good sense and reason

The period is also called the age of reason and good sense, because it was based on the good - sense ideal of the French critic Boileau. It was an age of enlightenment when a literature which had become pellucid and clear began to diffuse knowledge among a growing public. The supremacy of reason was scarcely challenged. There reigned a common belief in the advancement of human mind.

Religious and philosophic thought

The Augustans believed in respectability and designed conformity. They had no regard for boundless imagination and overflowing enthusiasm of the Elizabethan age. Their outlook was rational. The poets of this age strove to repress all emotion and enthusiasm. Good sense became the ideal of the time, and good sense meant a love of the reasonable and the hatred of the extravagant and mystical. Wit took precedence of imagination; inspiration was lost in technical skill. The whole literature of the age was marked by coldness and want of feeling.

The French influence

The 18th century literature was indebted to the growing influence of French literature. One notable feature of French influence may be seen in the tragedies in rhyme that were for a time in vogue, of which plots were borrowed from French romances. Boileau held supreme sway over the minds of the literary artists. He was almost a literary dictator.

Nature followed

An important characteristic of the age was the belief that literature must follow nature. Pope exhorted his contemporaries to follow nature. However, the nature of the Augustan period was not the nature of Wordsworth. The Augustans were drawn towards human nature rather than the nature we have in forests. Their sole aim was to copy man and manners of society. Alexander Pope said : "The proper study of mankind is man".

Reflection of the contemporary society

The literature of the age was concerned with the follies and foibles of the times. Literature became an interpretation of life, the kind of life that was led in the social and political circles of the times. Poetry became the poetry of the town, the coffee - house and artificial
society; Pope’s *The Rape of the Lock* is a classic example. The literature of the age lost all touch with the country life and became the literature of the town.

**Satire**

Satire is the literary art of diminishing or derogating a subject by making it ridiculous and evoking towards it attitudes of amusement, scorn, or indignation. Satire is usually justified by those who practice it as a corrective of human vice and folly.

Satire became the prominent form of literature during the Augustan age. The satires of Dryden are well known to us. In the age of Pope the love for satire came to the upper surface and the coldworldliness of Augustan life found its expression in polished wit and satire.

**Poetic diction**

The language of poetry became gaudy and inane and the ordinary language was kept out from poetic literature. The result was that the literature of the age became artificial, stilted, rational and intellectual, losing all inspiration, enthusiasm and romantic fervour which were the hall-marks of the literature of the Elizabethan age. The Augustans were superior in other ways, notable in satire and journalism, in the technical language of philosophy and science and in the great branch of modern literature, the novel, of which they were among the English pioneers.

**The heroic couplet**

In heroic couplet lines of iambic pentameter rhyme in pairs: aa, bb, cc and so on. The adjective “heroic” is applied because of the frequent use of such couplets in heroic poems (epic) and plays. This verse form was introduced into English poetry by Geoffrey Chaucer.

During the Augustan age the heroic couplet was recognised as the only medium of poetic expression. It was no longer possible to write one’s thoughts as the pen could move. The fastidiousness of the public ear did not appreciate “the mob of gentlemen who wrote with ease.” In the heroic couplet the poets put all their skill and wrote with an unimaginable correctness and precision.

- The 18th century was first designated as the Augustan age by *The Poet's Progress* - Oliver Goldsmith

- The Stuart monarchy in England was restored in 1660

- Who said, “the proper study of mankind is man”? *Alexander Pope*

- —— is the literary art of diminishing or derogating a subject by making it ridiculous and evoking towards it attitudes of amusement, scorn, or indignation

- *Satire*

**Alexander Pope (1688-1744)**

Alexander Pope was the predominant figure in the poetry of the 18th century. He was the representative poet of his century. He was the only poet who presented in his works almost all the essential qualities of the classical school of poetry. He was the high priest of a rationalistic and fashionable age.

The evolution of Pope’s poetic career is generally classified into four periods. In the first period he wrote his *Pastorals, Essay on Criticism*, and *The Rape of the Lock*. The translation of Homer was carried out in the second period. The third period, which is the best period of Pope’s life and which has been called the “Twickenham” or “Horatian” period, witnessed the composition of the *Dunciad* and the *Epistles*. The poet gave us in his fourth period his philosophical *Essay on Man* and *Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot*.

The first work of Pope which caught the eye of the public was *The Pastorals*. The *Pastorals* was written when Pope was only sixteen. It was published in 1709. The *Pastorals* was written in the style of Virgil, but one finds very little imitation of Virgil in it. The real merit of the *Pastorals* lay in its versification.

Following the tradition of Boileau, Pope published his *Essay on Criticism* in 1711. The Thoughts of *Essay on Criticism* are not original. They have all been borrowed from the ancients and the French. He presented skilfully the ideas borrowed from others in wonderfully terse, epigrammatic and quotable verse. Some of the observations in the *Essay on Criticism* have passed into language, such as, “A little, learning is a dangerous thing”; “To err is human, to forgive divine”; Fools rush where angels fear to tread etc.”

The *Rape of the Lock* was brought out in 1712.
The poem is so grateful, delicate, cynical and witty. It is a poem ridiculing the fashionable world of Pope's day, its immediate aim being to laugh at two families of his acquaintance into making up a quarrel over a trivial incident. The quarrel is presented in terms of great epic conventions and the impact of the poem, which for brilliance of conception and consistency of execution, is unsurpassed in literature. The poem is a masterpiece of its kind in mock-heroic style.

Pope took many years to complete translating Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey*. Bentley, the classical scholar, sarcastically remarked, "It is a pretty poem, Mr. Pope, but you must not call it Homer." For making this remark against the translation, Bentley had to suffer a lot in the hands of Pope in the epic satire, *Dunciad*.

After the publication of the *Translation of Homer*, Pope devoted his energies entirely to satirical works. The satires of Pope are modelled on the style of Horace and Juvenal, the classical writers. In his satires Pope attacked the personalities of his age. The supreme achievement in this direction, however, was the *Dunciad* written between 1725 and 1728. The core idea of *Dunciad* was taken from Dryden's *Mac Flecknoe*. While Dryden's attack was exclusively upon Shadwell, Pope, though aiming principally at Theobald, attacked the whole battalion of his enemies.

Pope's *Essay on Man* is a poem which reflects his moral and political ideas. The *Essay* is hopelessly confused and contradictory at many places, but as a work of art it occupies a place of its own in the poetic evolution of Pope.

The *Imitations of Horace* and the *Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot* are the most autobiographical works of Pope.

### Prose of the Age of Pope

#### Richard Steele (1672-1729)

Steele was a typical figure of the times and represented from the transition from the Restoration period to the Augustan Age. His first work *The Christian Hero* was thoroughly Augustan in character.

Richard Steele and Joseph Addison laid the foundation of the periodical essay during the 18th century. Steele started *The Tatler* in 1709, and he stated its purpose in these words: "The general purpose of this paper is to expose the false art of life, to puff off the disguises of cunning, variety and affectation, and to recommend a general simplicity in our discourse, and our behaviour." Under the pseudonym of Isaac Bickerstaff, Steele recommended truth, innocence, honour and virtue as the chief ornaments of life. *The Tatler* kept away from politics, its publication was stopped, and its place was taken by *The Spectator* to which Addison and Steele made diversified contributions.

As a writer Steele is remarkable for his versatility in conceiving humorous types of characters, for the wide range of his sympathies, for the readiness with which he adapts himself to his subject matter whether grave or gay in character.

Steele paved the way for the future development of periodical literature. The aim of Steel's essays was didactic. He desired to bring about a reform of the contemporary society manners. He is notable for his consistent advocacy of womanly virtue and the ideal of gentlemanly courtesy, chivalry and good taste.

#### Joseph Addison (1672 - 1719)

Addison's lasting contribution was to the formation of the periodical essay. Together with Richard Steele he formed and perfected the periodical essay, earlier in *The Tatler* and later on in the *The Spectator*. The first issue of *The Spectator* came out on 11th March, 1711. It was different from *The Tatler*, in that it consisted of a single long essay or pamphlet, whereas *The Tatler* contained several short articles on different subjects. *The Spectator* had two principal aims. The first object of the paper was to present a true and faithful picture of the 18th century. The second object was to bring about a moral and social reform in the conditions of the time. In short, the essays in *The Spectator* aspired to be a faithful reflection of the life of the time viewed with an aloof and dispassionate observation, and set out to be a mild censor of the morals of the age.

In the *Coverley Papers (The Spectator)* Addison laid stress on character portrayal, and the characters of Sir Roger de Coverley and Sir Andrew Freeport were
Jonathan Swift finely drawn. In these character-sketches we have the seed of the novel of character developed later on in the 19th century.

Addison's prose style

Addison taught and practised neatness, lucidity and precision of expression. His was the language of "actual talk".

Addison's prose style, compared with what went before it, is nearer to the language of conversation. Yet it is not the informal language of conversation altogether. Nor is it the ultraformal language of a serious and heavy treatise. It is free alike from the heaviness of high-bound formalism and the levity and licence of common speech. It is something like a via media between the two. Dr. Johnson calls it an example of the "middle style".

Praising Addison's style Dr. Johnson says, "His prose is the model of the middle style; on grave subjects not formal, on light occasions not grovelling. His page is always luminous, but never blazes in unexpected splendour. It was apparently his principal endeavour to avoid all harshness and severity of diction, he is therefore sometimes verbose in his transitions and connections, and sometimes descends too much to the language of conversation."

The Periodical Essay

The periodical essay was invented as a piece of journalism towards the end of the 17th century. It reached the pinnacle of its achievement in the work of Steele and Addison. It maintained great popularity throughout the 18th century, and disappeared about 1800. In the 18th century it was a popular genre and even more popular than the mock-heroic and novel. About its phenomenal popularity A.R. Humphrey observes: "If any literary form is the particular creation and the particular mirror of the Augustan Age in England, it is the periodical essay."

The main reason for the success of periodical literature in the 18th century lay in the fact that it suited the moral temper of the age. In the words of W.H. Hudson, "they set themselves as moralists to break down two opposed influences — that of the profligate Restoration tradition of loose living and loose thinking on the one hand, and that of Puritan fanaticism and bigotry on the other. Their method was admirably adapted to their purpose. They did not indulge in sweeping condemnations and unqualified invectives .... they wrote good humouredly, met all classes of people on their own ground, and made allowance for the ordinary failings of humanity; but at the same time they consistently advocated the claims of decency and good sense."

Attention to the interests of women became one of the invariable conventions of the periodical essay. W.H. Hudson says, "..... they addressed themselves awowedly and directly to women; and at a time when women in society were, as a rule, immersed in the mere trivialities of existence, they did their best to draw them into the currents of the larger intellectual life." They pointed out their follies and frailties but with a view to improve the status of women in society. The women were also thankful to these essayists and read their essays with keen interest.

The periodical essays were written in a simple, clear, conversational style to be understood by semi-educated or unscholarly readers. They avoided individual whims, conceits, witticism and harsh words which could not be appreciated by the middle classes and women who were among the main readers of periodical essays.

Jonathan Swift (1667-1731)

Jonathan Swift was one of the greatest literary figures of the Age of Pope. His writings have been generally considered works of fiction and art. Satire is the prime motive in all his works. His satire remains uniform in quality, but differs in degree. We have the same vein of satirical tone in his three great satires — The Battle of the Books, The Tale of a Tub and Gulliver's Travels.

In The Battle of the Books the moderns are lashed vigorously. Swift represents the Classics by the Bee, which flies from flower to flower culling all the sweetness that each has to offer, and the Moderns by the spider, spinning everything out of his own inside. The Battle of the Books is considered a great prose satire in English literature.
The Tale of the Tub is a brilliant satirical narrative on the excesses of the Catholics and Puritans as seen from the middle position of the Anglican Church.

Swift's, last satire, Gulliver's Travels, is in four books. The entire work is an elaboration of the attitude expressed by him to Pope, "I heartily hate and detest that animal called man." The book describes Gulliver's travels to the four lands of Lilliput, Brobdingnag, Laputa and Houyhnhnmland. The voyage to Lilliput and Brobdingnag satirised the politics and manner of the people of England and Europe; that to Laputa mocked the philosophers; and that to Houyhnhnmland lacerated and defied the whole body of Humanity.

Swift's method in all these works is to strike boldly with sarcasm and irony. In A Modest Proposal for Preventing the Children of Poor People from being a Burden, the terrible suffering in Ireland is presented in a mocking suggestion that the poor should devote themselves to the rearing of children to be killed and eaten.

The prose style of Swift

Swift's style is marked for its clarity, precision and conciseness. He never attempted to equip his sentences with redundant words, aware that from the simplest and the fewest arise the secret spring of genuine harmony. Compton - Rickett says, "Like other great stylists of the time — Pope and Addison — he achieves a triumphant clarity; but unlike Pope he is never epigrammatic; unlike Addison he had little plasticity of form. He is plainly and forcefully clear with a greater strength than theirs; all the more striking and urgent for his lack of ornament and concentrated passion."

Swift made no use of Latin words. Latin words are the cause for obscurity and Swift was dead set against obscurity.

Swift is the most original writer of his time, and one of the greatest masters of English prose. Directness, vigour and simplicity mark his pages.

Other Writers of the Age of Pope

John Arbuthnot (1667-1735)

Arbuthnot was an important literary and political figure of his time. He wrote The Art of Political Lying (1712) following in the footsteps of Swift. His political work, The History of John Bull (1712) ridiculed the war policy of the Whigs.

Lord Bolingbroke (1678-1751)

Bolingbroke was a great political figure of the Age of Pope. His prose work, marked with rhetoric, reflect his Tory views. Prominent works of Bolingbroke are A Letter on the Spirit of Patriotism (1736) and The Idea of a Patriot King (1738).

The Earl of Shaftesbury (1671-1713)

The Earl (Anthony Ashley Cooper) was an aristocrat of the time. He had little taste for politics and aspired to be famous as a great writer. His Men, Manners, Opinions and Times (1711) suited the taste of the time. (1711) suited the taste of the time.

- Pope's poem which reflects his moral and political ideas
  - Essay on Man

- The periodical essay was introduced in the 18th century by
  - Joseph Addison and Richard Steele

- Who started The Tatler (1709)?
  - Richard Steele

- The Tatler was replaced by
  - The Spectator

- The writer who took the pseudonym, Issac Bickerstaff
  - Richard Steele

- An autobiographical work of Swift.
  - Epistle to Dr Arbuthnot

- Pope's poem whose immediate aim was to laugh at two families of his acquaintance into making up a quarrel over a trivial issue
  - The Rape of the Lock

- The core idea of Pope's Dunciad was taken from
  - Dryden's MacFlecknoe

- ——— is a brilliant satirical narrative of Jonathan Swift on the excesses of the Catholics and puritans as seen from the middle position of the Anglican Church
  - The Tale of the Tub

- The Christian Hero is the work of
  - Richard Steele
John Dryden

"Every age had a kind of universal genius", wrote Dryden in his Essay on Dramatic Poesy, and in no poet are his own words more truly verified. In Dryden's works we have an excellent reflection of both the good and evil tendencies of the age in which he lived.

Dryden was the supreme satirist in verse of his age. In 1680, a prose tract Absalom's Conspiracy gave Dryden a hint for his most successful satire — Absalom and Achitophel (1681). The Duke of Monmouth and his evil counsellors, Shaftesbury and Buckingham, were mercilessly exposed in Absalom and Achitophel, the most powerful satire in English language.

Shaftesbury was acquitted from the charge of treason and a medal was struck to commemorate the event. Thereupon Dryden wrote The Medal, which was published in March 1682. It consists of continuous denunciation of Shaftesbury.

Dryden's next poem, Mac Flecknoe (1682), which has been described as a highly developed lampoon than a satire, makes fun of Shadwell, the Whig poet. In Mac Flecknoe, we have good-natured contempt. It is redeemed and enlivened by its humour.

Dryden's first religious poem, Religio Laici (1682) is a defence of the Church of England (the Anglican church) against other sects, especially the Roman Catholics and the Presbyterians.

His second religious poem, The Hind and the Panther (1687) is a long allegorical fable designed as an effort to draw the churches together, and restore their union. In the poem the "hind" stood for the Roman Catholic Church and the "panther" represented the Church of England.

Dryden's activities during the last years of his life were mainly confined to translations. In 1697 he translated the whole of Virgil. Dryden wrote a few fables in poetry based on the works of Boccacio and Chaucer. In the fables he versified the stories of Sigismonda and Guiscardo, Cymon and Iphigenia from Boccacio's Decameron, and paraphrased in his own style Chaucer's Knight's Tale, Nun Priest's Tale, Wife of Bath's Tale etc. These fables show him at his best and entitle him to the rank of a great story teller in verse.

Dryden's odes are of immense importance. The longest and the best known of this class are the Song for St. Cecilia's Day and Alexander's Feast. Dryden's next ode, To the Pious Memory of Mrs Anne Killigrew, was written in 1696. Dr Johnson called it the best ode in the language.

Dryden is known as a great artist in verse as well as in prose, and his reputation as a poet rests on his artistic excellence. T.S. Eliot says, "Much of Dryden's unique art consists in his ability to make the small into the great, the prosaic into the poetic, the trivial into the magnificent." He handed with dexterity the heroic couplet and the blank verse. In fact, the poetic instrument remains wholly in the service of the player's hand.

John Dryden exercised a powerful influence on the poets of the nineteenth century. Dryden's 'lofty line' was adopted by Pope, Gray, Johnson, Churchill and Canning. Dryden was, undoubtedly, the outstanding literary artist of his age.

Restoration Satire

Satire may be defined as the expression in adequate terms of the sense of amusement or disgust excited by the ridiculous, provided that humour is a distinctly recognizable element, and that the utterance invested with literary form. Without humour satire is invective, without literary form, it is mere clownish jeering. The manner of the satirist is different from that of a lyric poet. Since hatred and contempt are unpleasant feelings the satirical poet usually avoids giving them direct expression, and makes frequent use of irony. He banks largely on intellectual dexterity and brilliant versification to fascinate his reader and win admiration where he cannot hope for sympathy.

The Restoration age is essentially the age of satire. Judging and condemning became a common phenomenon of this age, and this habit naturally gave birth to the spirit of satire.

The Restoration of the Stuart monarchy brought royalism in its full glory and natural urge to attack the old regime of Puritanism found its best expression in
satires such as Butler's *Hudibras*. The open denunciation of false spiritual authorities became not only a duty but a pleasure with the Restoration writers.

Political atmosphere also aggravated the spirit of satire. With the Restoration old poetical spirits sprang up giving rise to political satires, particularly the satires of Dryden. The Whigs and Tories, two major political factions in England, engaged themselves virtually in a pen war.

The influence of classical satirists had much to do with the growing satirical spirit of the age. The study of classics promoted familiarity with the works of Horace, Juvenal and Persius. The writers considered it a matter of prestige to follow in the footsteps of the great masters of the past.

Finally, the general classical taste of the day favouring a type of literature which should be clear, concise and topical also gave rise to the spirit of satire during the age.

John Dryden wrote three outstanding satires: *Absalom and Achitophel*, *Mae* and *Mac Flecknoe*. They are masterpieces of political vigour, personal animosity and anti-puritan spirit. Dryden comes out in his satires as a man of his times as much under the influence of political conditions as any one of his victims. His manner of expression in his satires is sharp and witty and his diction is employed with deftness.

**Nahum Tate**

Nahum Tate (1652-1715) was an Anglo-Irish poet, hymnist and lyricist, who became Poet Laureate in 1692. Tate published a volume of poems in London in 1677, and became a regular writer for the stage. *Brutus of Alba, or The Enchanted Lovers* (1678), a tragedy dealing with Dido and Aeneas and *The Loyal General* (1680), were followed by a series of adaptations from Elizabethan dramas. In William Shakespeare's *Richard II* he altered the names of the characters, and changed the text so that every scene, to us his own words, was "full of respect of Majesty and the dignity of courts"; but in spite of these precautions *The Sicilian Usurper* (1681), as his rewrite was called, was suppressed on the third representation on account of a possible political interpretation.

*King Lear* (1687) was fitted with a happy ending in a marriage between Cordelia and Edgar; and *Coriolanus* became the *Ingratitude of a Commonwealth* (1682). From John Fletcher he adapted *The Island Princess* (1687); from Chapman and Marston's *Eastward Ho* he derived the *Cuckold's Haven* (1685); in 1707 he rewrote John Webster's *White Devil*; and Sir Aston Cockayne's *Trappolin suppos'd a Prince* he imitated in *Duke and no Duke* (1685).

Tate's name is chiefly connected with these mangled versions of other men's plays and with the famous *New Version of the Psalms of David* (1696), in which he collaborated with Nicholas Brady. Tate collaborated with John Dryden to complete the second half of his epic poem *Absalom and Achitophel*.

Tate was named as poet laureate in 1692. His poems were sharply criticised by Alexander Pope in *The Dunciad*. Of his numerous poems the most original is *Panacea*, a poem of *Tea* (1700). In spite of his consistent Toryism, he succeeded Thomas Shadwell as poet laureate in 1692. He died within the precincts of the Mint, Southwark, where he had taken refuge from his creditors, in 1715. He was succeeded by Nicholas Rowe.

**Other Restoration Satirists**

**Samuel Butler (1612-80)**

Butler was a Royalist and in his powerful satire, *Hudibras*, he satirised Puritanism in doggerel verse. The work is plainly modelled on *Don Quixote* of Cervantes.

**John Oldham (1653-83)**

Oldham was also a great satirist of the school of Juvenal. His two powerful satires are *Satire against Virtue* and *Satire upon the Jesuits*.

**Prose literature during the Restoration age**

The Restoration gave rise to a new prose style — plain, simple and graceful and suitable for historical and fictional narrative and for critical and philosophical thought.

The first important factor responsible for the new prose style was the establishment of the Royal Society of London in 1660. In the words of Thomas Sparc, the historian of the times, the Royal Society was determined to "reject all amplifications, digressions and swelling of style to return to the primitive purity, and shortness, when men delivered so many things, almost in an equal number of words."
Another distinguishing factor responsible for the new prose was the diffusion of the spirit of commonsense and the critical temper of mind which was not suitable for higher flights of imagination and rhetorical eloquence. A note of rationality and critical appraisal of life came up, and this critical temper did not allow them to be poets of exuberant fancy and naturally they introduced exactness and precision in their writings. Added to this was the growing influence of science which favoured clarity of thought and plainness of style.

French influence has much to do in the renovation of English prose. The French had cultivated grace, simplicity and lucidity in their expressions. The works of French authors were translated during this period, and that had much to do with the simplification of prose style.

Matthew Arnold summed up the renovation of English prose during this age in the following words:

"The Restoration marks the real moment of birth of our modern prose. It is by its organism — an organism opposed to length and involvement, and enabling us to be clear, plain and short — that English prose after the Restoration breaks with the style of the times preceding it, finds the true law of prose, and becomes modern: becomes, in spite of superficial differences, the style of our own day".

Among the creators of modern prose John Dryden must be placed in the front rank. He inaugurated a new era in English prose and criticism. He may be called the father of English prose style. Being a poet and dramatist, Dryden had to state the aims and objects of his poetry, argue new points, defend his heroic tragedy, and thereby create a taste in public for his works. For this purpose he employed prose. Dryden wrote essays and prefaces, and his two outstanding works of the genre are The Essay on Dramatic Poesy and Preface to the Fables. Giving up the long-winded, cumbersome sentences of the earlier prose writers of the 17th century, Dryden used a language marked with simplicity, straightforwardness and ease. A critical touch enlivens all the writings of Dryden.

**John Bunyan (1628-88)**

The other great name in the prose literature of Dryden's age is that of John Bunyan.

Bunyan's first book is his spiritual autobiography, *Grace Abounding*. His next work, *The Pilgrim's Progress*, is an allegory. Here the allegory takes the form of a dream by the author. The work is remarkable for the beauty and simplicity of its language, reality of impersonations and the author's sense of humour and feeling for the world of nature. In *The Pilgrim's Progress* Bunyan deals with the journey of a noble from This world to Paradise.

Another notable work of Bunyan is the novel, *The Life and Death of Mr Badman*, which gives the picture of a soul on its journey from this world to Hell.

**John Locke and Thomas Hobbes**

Political prose was developed by John Locke and Thomas Hobbes. Locke is the author of *Essay on the Human Understanding*, which is an examination into the nature of human knowledge. Hobbes, in his *Leviathan*, advocates monarchy, and holds the view that monarchy alone can preserve the society from disruption.

**Restoration comedy of manners**

The comedy of manners developed during the age of Dryden was greatly influenced by the French dramatist Moliere. The writers of the Restoration comedy devoted themselves specifically to picturing the external details of life, the fashion of the time, its manners, its speech and its interests.

The comedy of manners has been criticised for its licentiousness, obscenity and immorality. Macaulay denounced the immorality and obscenity prevalent in this type of comedy. Leslie Stephen echoed Macaulay in saying that this comedy was "written by blackguards for blackguards". There were defenders too. Prof. Boname Dobree maintained that Restoration comedy expressed "not licentiousness, but a deep curiosity and a desire to try new ways of living." Charles Lamb defended the obscenity of Restoration comedy as the device of artists to present the sense of reality in their plays.

The prominent writers of the comedy of manners, apart from John Dryden, are Sir George Etherege, William Wycherley, William Congreve etc.
Which period of time is designated as the age of Restoration?
- 1660 - 1700

Name a few French writers who deeply influenced the literature of the age of Restoration.
- Moliere, Pascal, Corneille, and Racine.

Dryden’s play which is regarded as the best representation of Heroic Play.
- Tyrannic Love

Name the work of Samuel Butler which is a satire on the Puritans.
- Hudibras

The first play of John Dryden
- The Wild Gallant

The first great satire of Dryden in verse.
- Absalom and Achitophel

"Every age has a kind of universal genius". This famous pronouncement of Dryden is made in his
- An Essay on Dramatic Poesy

The meaning of Dryden’s political satire Religio Laici.
- "Religion of a Layman."

The famous religious poems of Dryden which were written in defence of Roman Catholicism
- The Hind and the Panther

"Much of Dryden's unique art consists in his ability to make the small into the great, the prosaic into the poetic, the trivial into the magnificent". Name the critic who made this observation about Dryden.
- T.S. Eliot

Who is the main object of ridicule in Dryden's Mac Flecknoe?
- Thomas Shadwell

The spiritual autobiography of John Bunyan
- The Pilgrim's Progress

AGE OF DR JOHNSON (1745 -1798)

OR

THE AGE OF TRANSITION

The Trends of the Age of Transition

Double tendency

Two movements emerged during 1745-1798. One was still in the direction of classicism. The notable figure in this movement is Dr Samuel Johnson. There was also a romantic reaction against the old order. The search for romanticism started as early as 1740 with the publication of Thomson's Seasons.

The new learning

The minor renaissance of the middle and later stages of the 18th century touched nearly all Europe. In literature the revival of the Romantic Movement led to (a) research into literary forms such as the ballad and (b) new editions of older authors such as Shakespeare and Chaucer. The publication of Bishop Percy's Reliques (1765), which contained some of the oldest and most beautiful specimens of ballad-litterature, is a landmark in the history of the Romantic Movement.

The new philosophy

The spirit of the new thinking, which found its consummate expression in the works of Voltaire was marked by keen scepticism and the zest for eager inquiry. Scotland early took to it, the leading poet being Hume. Finally the new spirit assisted the Romantic ideal by demolishing and clearing away heaps of the ancient mental lumber, and so leaving the ground clear for new and fresher creations.

Historical research

The 18th century witnessed the swift rise of historical literature to a place of great importance. It touched Scotland first, and was fostered in France. The historical school had an outstanding leader in Edward Gibbon, who was nearly, as much at home in French as he was in English.

New realism

The development of novel, which at first concerned itself with domestic incidents was astonishing. Henry Fielding and his kind faithfully dealt with human
life. In the widest sense, however, the novelists were Romanticists, for in sympathy and freshness of treatment they were followers of the new ideal.

**Decline of political writing**

With the partial decay of party spirit the activity of pamphleteering was over. Writers started depending on the public, and this caused the rise of eminent men like Johnson and Goldsmith.

**Characteristics of the transitional poets of the 18th century**

The first transitional period in English literature was the age of Chaucer. It was a transitional period, because it was the meeting ground of the Middle Age and the Renaissance spirit. Similarly the age of Johnson is a period of transition which witnessed a struggle between the old order of classicism and the new order of Romanticism, and the gradual triumph of the new. Thomson, Somerville, Edward Young, Gray, Collins, and Cowper are the prominent transitional poets; they had their leanings towards the new spirit of romanticism, but none of them made a deliberate effort to shake off the worn out diction then current. Though these poets maintained their allegiance to the school of Pope, they were susceptible to a different range of influences, and sought fresh subjects, fresh forms, and fresh modes of feeling and expression. We may, at the same time, recognize the breaking up of the Augustan tradition in the work of these poets. In the words of Moody and Lovett, "the death of Pope in 1744 is conventionally regarded as marking the end of the period during which the classical ideal was dominant in literature. This ideal was now to give way gradually to what is called the Romantic movement."

**Characteristics of the Age of Transition**

**Reaction in form**

The neo-classical poets strictly adhered to the closed couplet. With the transitional poets, a reaction set in against this tradition, and experiments were made in other kinds of verse, such as the blank verse and the Spensarian stanza. Growing admiration for Milton was the principal cause for the rise and popularity of blank verse. Notable poems of the time written in blank verse are Thomson's *Seasons*, Somerville's *The Chase* and Edward Young's *Night Thoughts*.

Many of the poets of the Age of Johnson sought inspiration from the poetry of Spenser. They reproduced not only the Spensarian stanza, but even the great master's archaic diction. The influence of Spenser is evident in the fact that over 50 poems in Spensarian stanza were published between 1730 and 1775. The revival of the Spensarian stanza can be seen in Thomson's *Castle of Indolence*.

**Return to nature**

The reviving love for nature first became conspicuous in Allen Ramsay's *The Gentle Shepherd* (1725). The revival of interest in real landscape was popularised by James Thomson in his *Seasons* (1730). No doubt, *The Seasons* still shares the features of the Augustan school in its note of didacticism, highly Latinised vocabulary, conventional poetic diction, and frigid and bombastic style.

John Dyer made a first hand study of nature in his poem *Gronger Hill*. From this time on the love of nature became increasingly prominent in the poetry of Gray, Collins, Cowper, Blake and Burns.

Cowper's poems reflect his simple pleasures, his love of nature, his interest in the lives of the humble and the simple, and his sensibility. Nature was his best healer, and he anticipates the lake poets he anticipates the lake poets in the way he expresses his gratitude. He believed the country is divine and town diabolical. He summed up the idea in the off-quoted line.

"God made the country, and man made the town."

**The return to feeling**

The prominent characteristics of the transitional poets were the return to feeling, strong passion, sentiment, aspiration and melancholy. The Augustan poets rejected the exhibition of any manifestation of feeling and their poetry appeared to the intellect rather than moved the heart. Edward Young's *Night Thoughts* was the first great appeal to melancholy. He discovered an exquisite pleasure in nocturnal churchyard meditation, his thoughts haunting newly dug graves, with the pale light of moon shining down upon him. Young was followed by Robert Blair's *The Grave*, Thomas Warton's *The pleasures of Melancholy*, Gray's *Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard* and Collin's *Ode to Evening*. 
The cult of romance

A Romantic poet is the lover of the wild, fantastic, abnormal and supernatural. His delight is in imagination which leads his thoughts into the past, and to remote lands. The transitional poets went to the Middle Ages, and the world of the supernatural. Gray's The Bard is based on a Welsh medieval legend, and his other poems, Fatal Sisters and The Descent of Odin reproduced Scandinavian legends. The interest in the Middle Ages was due largely to the revival of ballad literature. Bishop Percy's The Reliques of Ancient English Poetry (1765), a collection of ballad literature of the past, proved a great power in spreading romantic tales.

Medieval revival was accompanied by the heroic and legendary world of Celtic antiquity. James Macpherson published his Fragments of Ancient Poetry Collected in the Highlands of Scotland and Translated from Gaelic or Erse Language. The work was successful in arousing readers' curiosity in the Celtic mythology.

Thus some of the transitional poets heralded the revival of romanticism which reached its acme in the hands of Wordsworth and Coleridge. Though these transitional poets represented one or the other characteristic of romanticism, yet, they were not thorough romantics, because they had also their association with the Augustan school. This is evident in their use of poetic diction, use of personification, and the note of didacticism.

- What is generally regarded as the slogan of the "transition poets"?
  - "Return to Nature"
- According to Moody and Lovett whose death is regarded as conventionally marking the end of the neo-classical period?
  - Alexander Pope
- The transition poets were believed to have anticipated the romantics in their writings on nature. To whom do we attribute this line that best explains the change of outlook?
  - "God made the country, and man made the town"
  - William Cowper
- The Complaint and The Consolation form part of Edward Young's poem
  - Night Thoughts

Prominent Transition Poets

James Thomson (1700-1748)

Thomson was a Scottish poet endowed with a love and appreciation for nature and the dreamy life of the Middle Ages. His poem, The Seasons, introduced for the first time genuine love for nature. It is a blank-verse poem with descriptive passages dealing with natural scenes, mainly those with which he was familiar during his youth on the Scottish border. The poem exerted a strong counter influence against the artificial school of poetry.

Thomson's The Castle of Indolence was published in the last year of his life. The poem is in the Spensarian stanza, and in the true Spensarian fashion it gives a description of a lotus-land, into which world-weary souls are invited to withdraw.

Thompson gave voice to deep aspirations which many shared. He restored nature to one of the first places among the subjects of poetry, and to a place from which she was never to be dislodged.

Edward Young (1638-1765)

Young belongs to the Graveyard School of Poetry. The notable poems of Young are The Universal Passion and Night Thoughts. The Universal Passion is a satire against fame and women. The Night Thoughts is a long meditation on the futility of life. The poem contains a series of reflections upon the brevity and tragic, uncertainties of life leading to a view of religion as man's consoler.

With Young, self came into the foreground and his work represents the real beginning of the literature of sensibility. Necessarily subjective in principle, it ends with all its might to bring about the overthrow of the barrier of the intellectuality, measure, and order, as well as the general effacement, by which classicism limited, repressed and transposed the troubled impatient flow of life.

Thomas Macpherson (1736-1796)

Macpherson contributed immensly to popularising the literature of the Middle Ages and the Highland by publishing his two books, Fingal (1762) and Temora (1763). The central motive of these poems is the pathetic sense of regret for what once has been. They
pass in review the glorious imagery of bygone days and they touch upon the sadness of modern times.

**Thomas Percy (1729-1811)**

Percy, the Bishop, was an antiquarian scholar with literary sensibilities. His two prominent works are *The Reliques* (1765) and *Northern Antiquities* (1760). *The Relics* included many old Scottish ballads from the time before Chaucer to the end of the reign of Charles I. Literature owes a deep debt to Percy as the first populariser of old English ballads. The ballads had a splendid effect in quickening the romantic impulse, by virtue of their naïve feeling and simple passionate expression. The work of Percy helped to restore to English poetry simplicity of emotion, of language and poetic art.

**George Crabbe (1754-1832)**

Crabbe came late among the transitional poets and he used the heroic couplet of Pope in the expression of his romantic sympathy for the poor. Crabbe was a clergyman, and his three poems, *The Village* (1783), *The Parish Register* (1703) and *The Borough* (1810), bring him in line with the precursors of the Romantic Movement, because in these works he realistically but sympathetically described the life of the simple villagers and cottagers whom he had known as a priest. He painted the life of the poor as he knew it, sternly and uncompromisingly. The motivating power behind Crabbe's poetry is his desire to state the plain unvarnished truth about the life of the peasant and to destroy the idealised, artificial picture of it presented by the 18th century pastoral.

**William Cowper (1731-1800)**

Cowper's poetry breathes a sympathy which shows a long association with the world of reality and an intimate knowledge of its way. His themes are common place, but they represent the elementary truths of the heart, rather than of intelligence.

In technique, Cowper belongs to the old rather than to the new. Some of the good qualities of the old school that he shared are clarity, painstaking care of expression, and, on the whole, an easy tranquillity of atmosphere. We shall find in his work neither the passion nor the strangeness of the Romantic School. According to Compton - Rickett, "Cowper is a blend of the old and the new with much of the form of the old and something of the spirit of the new."

**Oliver Goldsmith (1728-1774)**

His contribution to the poetry of the Romantic revival

Goldsmith shared the qualities of classicism and romanticism. Though he stood midway between the school of Pope and the Romantic School, Goldsmith was more sympathetic to the former. In his ideals and concepts of literature, Goldsmith was a staunch supporter of the classical school. For him the classical couplet (Heroic Couplet), the form adopted in *Traveller*, was the best vehicle for the highest kind of poetry, the didactic poetry. In his use of the heroic couplet, Goldsmith was a dedicated follower of Alexander Pope.

Goldsmith's language was in accordance with the rules set up by Pope. He indulged in stilted (too formal), pompous and Latinized expressions and showed a great love for abstractions and personifications, which were loved by Pope. For instance, he used "angel for the finny prey" for fish and "attic warbler" for the nightingale.

Goldsmith retained the didactic or teaching element in his poetry, and thereby he kept up his link with Pope and his followers. His poems *The Traveller* and *The Deserted Village* are philosophical and didactic.

Goldsmith also exhibited his power of writing satiric poetry in his *Retaliation*. The pictures of Garrick, Burke and others in the poem are pungent, sharp and satirical in tone and style.

Goldsmith's treatment of nature and rural life is romantic. He loved nature, and in his poetry, there are beautiful pictures of natural beauty.

Goldsmith's sympathy for the poor and simple people of *The Deserted Village* and the simple peasants of Switzerland in *The Traveller* connects him with Wordsworth. His heart moved with sympathy at the sight of suffering people and idealized the simple lives of the poor. Like Gray, Goldsmith found a splendid source of inspiration in "the short and simple annals of the poor".
Goldsmith's poetical works

Goldsmith's first poem, *The Traveller*, deals with his wandering through Europe. The poem, written in heroic couplet, is a series of descriptions and criticism of the people and places he had seen. The work reveals a clear perception of the suffering of the poor, where "laws grind the poor, and the rich men rule the laws." The poem abides by the heroic couplet, and to that extent he is Pope's pupil.

*The Traveller* is a didactic poem, and it aims at the teaching of some philosophic truths. Its purpose is to establish the preposition that, when all things are taken into account and advantages and disadvantages are duly tabulated and balanced, one country offers to a wise man as good a chance of happiness as another.

The poem is highly pictorial and picturesque. It brings before us fleeting pictures of various countries of Europe. Italy with its rich natural scenes, Switzerland with its hard-toiling peasants, Holland with its sea and slavery, France with its drollery and gay display, and England with its proud people, full of the zeal for freedom, come dancing before our eyes as we pass from one description to another.

*The Traveller* is autobiographical in character. It tells about Goldsmith's own experience and is intensely subjective in nature. The poem is really a masterpiece.

*The Deser ted V illage*

The poem, which appeared in 1770, is full of charming pictures of village life and contains melancholic personal reflections.

*The Deser ted V illage* is a pastoral lyric that carries no artifice but genuine emotion that beats into rhythm, the ecstatic of beholding the joys of the peasantry, the pathos of seeing those joys transforming into sorrows, and the indignation that is not against the government that framed laws to grind the poor and elevate the rich.

Name the poems of Goldsmith that were described by Swinburne as "priceless and adorable power ofsweet human emotion".

- *The Deser ted V illage* and *The Traveller*

—— was Goldsmith's first poem.

- *The Traveller*

Which poem of Goldsmith deals with his wandering through Europe?
- *The Traveller*

Which poem of James Thomson gives a description of a lotus-land into which world weary souls are invited to withdraw?
- *The Castle of Indolence*

"A Pope in worsted stocking". The poet who is labelled thus by Horace Smith.
- *George Crabbe*

Horace Smith called Crabbe so, because of the latter's frequent use of the heroic couplet, popularised by Alexander Pope.

*The Castway* is a poem by
- *William Cowper*

Who was characterised as the "marvellous boy" by Wordsworth in his *Resolution and Independence*?
- *Thomas Chatterton*

*The Parish Register* was written by
- *George Crabbe*

Name Goldsmith's poem that is regarded as autobiographical in nature.
- *The Traveller*

The expression "attic warbler" is reflective of Goldsmith's pompous style. "Attic Warbler" means
- *Nightingale*

Thomas Gray (1716-1771)

Gray began his poetic career in 1742. During this year, he wrote the Odes, *On Spring, On a Distant Prospect of Eton College* and *Hymn to Adversity*. These poems reveal two things first, the appearance of that melancholy that characterises all the poetry of time, and second, the study of nature, not for its own beauty or truth, but rather as a suitable background for the play of human emotions. In each poem, sentiment leads to a reflection, and reflection to moral.

Gray's *Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard* is the supreme expression of his poetic genius. It is his most popular work. Some vital characteristics of Romanticism are present in the *Elegy*. Firstly, the poem
expresses sympathy with the lot of the common people who lived far away from the madding crowd, thereby failing to gain recognition. This adoration of the annals of the simple people is essentially a romantic trait and Gray introduces it in the *Elegy* commemorating life of the people living in the country surroundings. Secondly, there is a note of pessimism and melancholy in the poem, which was, later on, cultivated and developed by Keats and Shelley. The love for nature and landscape, the solitary atmosphere of the night, the haunted places where the owl hoots, all clearly show that the poet had caught the spirit of Romanticism in a subdued form. The *Elegy* represents Gray's transitional frame of mind.

Gray's *The Progress of Poesy* is a poem on the history of poetry. *The Bard* is closely associated with Celtic mythology. The poem is founded on the command of Edward I that all the bards should be killed. Another poem, *Ode on the Death of a Favourite Cat*, exhibits Gray's comic or humorous side. The poem tells how a cat in search of a fish in a tub got drowned and felt sorry for her greed. Even a humorous poem has a note of moral attached to it quite in the manner and style of 18th century poetry.

*The Fatal Sisters* and *The Descent of Odin* are poems in which Gray reveals himself as an ardent lover of nature and the beautiful. The poems mark the end of Gray's poetic career. During the course of thirty years of his poetic career Gray could not produce much. Inspite of his slender poetic output Gray is regarded as one of the greatest poets of his age.

**Characteristics of Gray's poetry**

In Gray's poetry we have glimpses of sentiment and emotion which later on were cultivated with devotion by the romantic poets. In the earlier poems of Gray there is the touch of cold intellectuality but from the publication of *The Elegy* to *The Descent of Odin*, the emotional tone gets the upper hand and the poems written after 1750 are coloured by emotion and sentiment. The note of melancholy and gloominess is a notable characteristic of Gray's poetry. This was primarily because the life of the poet was sorrowful. The poet's own personal life is represented in *The Elegy* with a note of melancholy in the concluding part of the poem. The presentation of the life of the country people is also coloured by the same gloomy note. For Gray human life was a painful affair.

There is a natural sensitiveness to musical cadence in Gray's poetry. Gray learnt the power of music from Milton and Dryden, and in his poetry there is a flow and a melody which we find in the odes of Dryden.

**William Collins (1721-1759)**

Collins's poetry is marked by a note of melancholy. His debilitated state of health gradually settled into absolute melancholia. Another feature of Collins's poetry is the note of simplicity. Regarding his affinity to nature it should be said that the pictures of landscapes and natural scenery presented in his poems are realistic as well as graphic. In his *Ode to Evening* the note of naturalism is fresher than is to be found among the poets of his age. It is as a lyric poet, as a singer that Collins stands out from among his contemporaries. A note of music and lyricism is well struck in the *Ode to the Passions*. It is in *Ode for Music* and *Passions* that Collins's love for music and lyricism is brought.

The poetry of Gray is intellectual and rational is character. It is always disciplined by his intellect and refined by his taste.

There is a love for nature in Gray's poetry, but no subjective treatment of nature as we notice in the romantic poets. Gray finds delight in the presentation of scenes of nature.

Love of humanity is an important characteristic of Gray's poetry. We come across, in his poems, love of humanity, particularly for the villagers which was later on cultivated by Wordsworth. In his *Elegy* Gray brings before us most sympathetically the life-story of the villagers who led a simple life far away from the madding crowd, and who were not governed by feeling of jealousy, ambition and hatred. This representation of the simple life makes Gray one with Wordsworth in the treatment of human beings in villages and cottages.

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A peculiar romantic characteristic which is found in Collins's poetry is his love for liberty. In this way the poet proved to be the true harbinger of the Romantic Movement.

**Robert Burns (1759 - 1796)**

Robert Burns was probably the greatest of Wordsworth's forbears. With the appearance of Burns it could be said that the days of Romanticism had come. Burns's sole poetical work of any magnitude is his *Volume of Poems* (1786), which he edited five times during his life time, making numerous additions and corrections each time.

Burns is regarded as the national poet of Scotland. Many of the familiar features in Scottish poetry reappear in Burns. Love and intimate knowledge of nature, quaint dialect, passionate concreteness of imagery, rich allusiveness (qualities of Scottish life) are found well illustrated in his poetry.

Regarding Burns's contribution to the eighteenth century poetry, it could be said that inspire of his feeble attachment to the school of Pope, he heralded the birth of Romanticism. The inner elements of Romanticism - personal effusion, sensibility, a keen love for nature, a wealth of imaginative fancy and a sympathetic interest in the poor and the animals - are to be found in the work of Burns.

- Which poem of Thomas Gray is regarded as the supreme expression of his poetic genius?
  - *Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard*

- Gray's poem which is considered to be the history of poetry.
  - *The Progress of Poesy*

- Name the poem of Gray which is associated with Celtic mythology.
  - *The Bard*

- ______ is a poem that displays comic or humorous aspect of Gray.
  - *Ode on the Death of a Favourite Cat*

- *Ode to Pity* is a melancholic poem written by
  - *William Collins*

- Collins's love for simplicity is presented in his
  - *Ode to Simplicity*

- About whom does Campbell say: "His lyrical pieces are like paintings on glass which must be placed in strong light to give out the perfect radiance of their colouring."
  - *Thomas Gray*

- The line, "My Love Is Like a Red Red Rose" is attributed to
  - *Robert Burns*

- ______ was Goldsmith's first poem
  - *The Traveller*

**William Blake (1757-1827)**

William Blake was the most mystical and metaphysical poet of the Romantic Revival during the 18th century. Blake's first publication was *Poetical Sketches* (1783), a series of imitative poems, in which he experimented with various forms, in the manner of Shakespeare, Spenser and Milton. *Songs of Innocence*, which came out in 1789, are short lyrics concerning Blake's views of the original state of the human society, symbolized in the joy and happiness of children. The poems present a passionate sympathy and deep sincerity for the child.

*The French Revolution* (1791), *The Visions of the Daughters of Albion* (1793), *America* (1793) and *The Europe* (1794) are the revolutionary prophetic works of Blake. *The French Revolution* and *America* contain Blake's thoughts about freedom, not only political freedom, but freedom from the restrictions of convention and established morality. In 1794 appeared the *Songs of Experience*. In this is presented the two conflicting aspects of nature which is so beautiful yet so cruel. *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* is the most prophetic of Blake's poems.

**Main features of Blake's poetry**

Blake was a lyrical poet. In his earlier lyrics, Blake followed the Elizabethan models, and in his *Poetical Sketches* and *The Songs of Innocence* are embodied some of the best lyrics of English language. Still in some poems, for example, *A War Song to an English Man*, the mystic note is traceable.

In *The Songs of Innocence*, we have happy notes, purity, sweetness, intensity of feeling, simple perfection of diction and a variety of rhythm.
Blake's *The Little Black Boy* is a metaphysical poem. In his *Songs of Experience* thought begins to predominate and the prophetic creed become clear still. After this volume, Blake ceased to be a writer of pure lyrics, and became more and more a poet of visionary idealism, symbolism and mysticism. It is in this note of symbolism and mysticism in his lyrics that Blake differs from Burns and Swinburne whose lyrics are simple and realistic. C.M. Bowra remarks: "Indeed no English poet, except Shakespeare, has written songs of such experience, lightness and melody. His words have an Elizabethan lilt, a music which emphasizes their meaning and confirms exactly to it."

Blake struck the note of humanitarianism in his poetry. A note of love and sympathy was sounded by Blake in his poetry for the common and oppressed people of the society. His sympathy included even animals and birds.

Blake was the poet of revolt, and he thundered at king's and priests and oppressive rulers in his prophetic writings. He revolted against the religious conventions of the day and mercilessly attacked priest craft and hackneyed conventions of the contemporary church which he thought to be the greatest obstacle in the way of human progress.

Blake was a mystic and visionary idealist. The world of Blake was spiritualistic, infinite, illimitable, and everlasting rather than temporal and momentary. In his world of thoughts, ideas and visions, love was the supreme governing authority.

Blake was the supreme mystic poet of his age. Like all mystic poets Blake emphasised the momentariness of the body and immortality of the soul. He regarded the world as a dark prison and physical senses as narrow windows darkening the infinite soul of man.

As a follower of naturalism, Blake dealt with the simplest phases of life, with the instinctiveness of a child, with the love of flowers, hills, streams and the blue sky. Yet the mystical vision of the poet transformed these familiar things into something strange and wonderful.

Blake had his own vision and he lived in a world which was entirely his own what he experienced in his strange spiritual vision was inexplicable in ordinary words and phrases. Thus it was inevitable and necessary for him to arrange visible symbols of invisible realities that he experienced in his vision. To present all that he saw and believed to be real, he thought that ordinary language would fail miserably. Thus he took to symbolism. Like Shelley he used the objects of nature as symbols to suggest spiritual realities. Blake's symbols are also taken from The Bible. His symbolic expressions through poetry kindle the imagination of the readers and arise in them a curiosity for a world unknown.

As a poet of childhood, Blake's contribution is immense. The innocence of childhood finds its finest expression in Blake's *Songs of Innocence*. The sorrows that subdue one in the growing years are presented realistically in the *Songs of Experience*. It is commonly believed that in his treatment of childhood Blake anticipated Wordsworth.

- Name the pre-romantic poet who is also noted as an engraver.
  - *William Blake*
- The first publication of William Blake was titled
  - *Poetical Sketches (1783)*
- Blake presents the defence of the satisfaction of physical appetite in his poem titled
  - *The Visions of the Daughters of Albion*
- *The Little Black Boy* of Blake is a ——— poem
  - *Metaphysical*
- In his zeal and enthusiasm for liberty and equality of man, Blake is believed to have anticipated the romantic poet
  - *Shelley*
- In the poem *Clod and the Pebble*, what do clod and pebble stand for?
  - *Clod* - *Selfishness*
  - *Pebble* - *Selfish love*
- Name the collection of Blake's poems that deals with the innocence of childhood.
  - *Songs of Innocence*

**Eighteenth century poetic diction**

The term poetic diction is applied specifically to the practice of the neo-classical writers who believed that the poet must adopt his diction to the mode and
elevation of the genre called poetry. When the eighteenth century poets began to write epics, pastorals or odes, they required a special diction to raise the matter to the height of the form. This special diction, somewhat stilted (stiff and unnatural) and artificial was challenged by William Wordsworth in preface to the second Edition of *The Lyrical Ballads* (1800). Wordsworth protested against what he called "the gaudiness and inane phraseology of many modern writers".

It was John Dryden who is actually credited with the introduction of poetic diction. In his translation of Virgil, Dryden employed dignified diction. Dryden's mind was fired by an unflagging admiration for great poetry, and this feeling finds expression in his translations and odes.

The eighteenth century poets were particular about the division of poetry into various kinds, such as elegy, satire, epic etc. And, these different types called for different kinds of vocabulary. In the eighteenth century, writing poems was a communal art in the sense that the poet was not free to choose an independent mode of writing. He had to learn much before he could write correctly. He could not offend rules and distinctions acknowledged by the poets and readers.

Alexander Pope applied artificial diction in his translation of Homer. Pope felt that the dignity and sublimity of Homer could not be effectively expressed in ordinary language. Pope used the term poetic diction in the preface to his translation of the *Iliad* to mark the difference between the vocabulary of prose and poetry.

After Pope poets such as Thompson, Gray, Collins, Cowper, Goldsmith and Dr. Johnson made use of poetic diction, the prominent characteristics of which were the use of conventional epithets, compound epithets, avoidance of direct statement and the use of fantastic phraseology.

- Which group of writers are chiefly associated with the concept of poetic diction?
  - Neo-classical writers
- Name the romantic poet who first challenged the artificial diction, which was the hallmark of the eighteenth century writers?
  - William Wordsworth
- *Biographia Literaria* is the work of
  - Samuel Taylor Coleridge

- Who was the outstanding eighteenth century critic who expressed his keen dislike for Milton's *Lycidas* on the ground that much in it was unnatural or away from common experience?
  - Dr Johnson
- *De Vulgari Eloquentia* which contains valuable observations on the language of poetry, is the work of
  - Dante

**Drama of the Eighteenth Century**

**Decline of drama**

During the 18th century drama steadily declined. There are many factors that led to the decline of drama. First of them was the popularity of novels; free from most of the conventions which burdened the theatre, it succeeded better in depicting life, manners and ideas. During this age actors and actresses became more important than playwrights. The attraction which the people felt for actors rather than for playwrights discouraged writers to produce good plays.

Another factor was the revival of old plays, it hindered the creation of new plays. The plays of Shakespeare, Beaumont and Fletcher were revived. This revival gave no incentive to writers to the age to produce new plays. They thought the writing of new plays would be a futile effort since people of the age were more interested in the revival of old plays. The French fashions and costumes were in vogue in the 18th century. The theatre managers were attracted by the gorgeous and extravagant fashions and the attention of the audience was taken off from the living stage.

Drama declined during this age because it failed to receive the support of the king. William III was no patron of the theatre, nor was Queen Anne. Without the support of the king it was difficult for dramatists to make their influence felt in the public. During this age dramatists were debarred from indulging in the presentation of obscene scenes. It was Collier who inaugurated the moral reform in the drama and the audience felt that drama should only be written on lines of moral edification. Naturally the scope of drama became restricted and sentiment began to have its way in the world of comedy. Everything that seemed to have the tone of fun and humour was regarded as a matter of distaste by the public. It was of great significance that
Goldsmith and Sheridan broke new ground by writing the comedy of humours and by setting their face against the sentimental comedy of this age.

Moral restraint was followed by political restraint. The Licensing Act was passed in 1737. As a result, dramatists were restrained from writing in which there was the slightest reflection on the political figures of the time. Tragedy particularly suffered because of the classical spirit of the age. Full blooded tragedies, marked with emotional excitement and fervour could not be produced in the age because of the attitude of reason and rationality towards literary productions.

**Sentimental comedy**

The sentimental comedy of the eighteenth century was a reaction against the comedy of manners of the Restoration period. The comedy of manners was characterised by light-hearted fun, obscenity and trenchant dialogues. Their aim was to make fun of pious and holy characters.

In sentimental comedy laughter and humour were completely driven out and in place of comedy, which was rich in humour, pathos and pathetic situations were introduced. The life force of comedy is humour, which was casted out in sentimental comedy. The writers of this school introduced characters from middle class life characterised by virtue without any grain of vice in them. They sought to eulogise virtue and condemn vice. Comedy writers were in fact moralists and their purpose was to teach moral lessons through the medium of their plays. They wanted to propagate something moral and pathetic and something edifying and genteel.

Sentimental comedy remained popular for nearly half a century. It drove out genuine comedy from the English stage. It provided moral lectures and sentimental platitudes in place of real entertainment. It was serious from the beginning to end and was entirely removed from the realities of life. It was replete with improbable and unnatural situations; its characters were not real men and women, but abstractions conceived in the minds of the playwrights.

**Dramatists of the 18th century**

**Richard Steele (1672-1729)**

Steele, who popularized the *Periodical Essay* was perhaps the greatest figure among the writers of the sentimental comedy. He made the pathetic treatment of a moral sentiment, the basis of the action of a comic drama. His works are *Lying Lover, Tender Husband* and *The Conscious lovers*.

**Henry Fielding (1707-54)**

He was equally a great novelist, writer of comedy and farce. He made clever adaptations of French works. It was in parody and political satire that he obtained his personal success. He achieved success in his *Tragedy of Tragedies or The Life and Death of Tom Thumb the Great*, *Pasquin*, *The Historical Register for the Year*. His raillery at the fashions of the time, his banter of well known people, especially in high places and members of the government, disturbed the authorities to such an extent that they re-established the censorship.

**Oliver Goldsmith (1728-74)**

Goldsmith revived the Comedy of Humours of the Elizabethan Age and gave a hard blow to the sentimental comedy. He said that sentimental comedy was more like a tragedy. He tried to revive sincere laughter on the stage. This first attempt was *The Good-natured Man* which was a failure. The second play *She Stoops to Conquer* was a great success. The plot was well-knit, mawkish sentimentality was driven out, the sense of pathos supplanted by mirth and delight. In this he introduced the qualities of a true comedy.

Goldsmith was a versatile genius. He was born in Ireland as the second son of a poor Irish clergyman. His childhood was not memorable with his illness, disfigurement due to it and was often the laughing stock of his mates and teachers. He struggled a lot to attain his livelihood by trying different professions but succeeded in none of them. Finally he obtained a medical degree. But later he found literature as a means for livelihood. He got acquainted with Dr Johnson which provided a foundation for the life-long friendship between them. Johnson's friendship proved valuable for Goldsmith. Johnson made him the member of the literary club. He had high hopes from Goldsmith, which he later justified by writing *The Traveller*, *The Deserted Village*, *The Vicar of Wakefield*, *She Stoops to Conquer*, *The Retaliation*, *The History of Greece* and *Animate Nature*. In 1774 he caught fevers of which he died.
He was a great dramatist, novelist and an even a greater essayist. He had a prominent place in the 18th century literature. He was a great poet, his prose of astonishing range and volume. He wrote many essays on personal and impersonal objects in the manner of Addison. The essays of Goldsmith are characterised by whimsicality, satire, mild humour and graceful charm. They are satirical reflections upon society of his times. He criticises manners and ideas in England.

His prose style was graceful, charming and amiable; pure and easy, and on proper occasion pointed and energetic. It may be said that he is uniformly pleasing. His essays in The Citizen of the World is a series of imaginary letters from a philosophical Chinaman, writing letters home from London, giving Goldsmith the opportunity of expressing his own mind upon the society and literature of the day. His essays in The Bee are admirable. He wrote short memoirs and lives such as Life of Beau Nash, Memoir of Voltaire and Life of Bolingbroke.

His contribution to literature, whether in prose, verse or drama, was to sweeten and purify it from its violence, coarseness and bitter wit. He had qualities of his own, a tranquil magic, a tender homeliness, a light iridescent humour that will ever endear him to posterity. As a stylist Goldsmith is definitely superior to Addison. He is great because style is inseparable from thought.

R.B. Sheridan (1751-1816)

Sheridan's dramas are written in the mood of satirical observation of life. He was not a psychologist but a shrewd and penetrating observer; he was more able to perceive the secret movement of vanity or envy than to construct character. His main plays are The Rivals, The School for Scandal, The Critic, The Duenna, St. Patrick's Day, The Scheming Lieutenant etc. Sheridan has been justly called a dramatic star of the first magnitude. His prose comedies resemble the best of the Restoration comedies. The plots are ingenious and effective. The dialogue is brilliant in its picturesque, epigrammatic repartee. The plays are remarkable for their vitality and charm.

- Who is credited with the initiation of moral reform in drama?
  - Collier

- Name two playwrights of the 18th century who were associated with the comedy of humours.
  - Sheridan and Goldsmith

- A legislation of the 18th century that restrained dramatists from writing plays with reflections on the political figures of the day.
  - The Licencing Act of 1737

- The sentimental comedy was basically a reaction against
  - the comedy of humours

- The School for Scandal is a play by
  - Richard Brinsley Sheridan

- Name two plays of Oliver Goldsmith.
  - She Stoops to Conquer and The Good-natured Man

Prose of the 18th century (Age of Transition)

Types of prose of the period: In the period of transition, prose was immensely enriched by the contributions of a host of writers.

Critical prose: The work of Dr Johnson his Lives of Poets and Preface to Shakespeare.

Biographical prose: Biography was attempted with great success by Boswell in Life of Dr Johnson.

Essay: Essay was cultivated both in the style of the periodical essay and the personal essay by Dr Johnson and Goldsmith.

Letters and memoir writers: Prose was used in writing letters and memoirs and the prominent figures are Lady Mary Montague, Horace Walpole, Earl of Chesterfield and Dr Johnson.

Historical prose: A number of authors wrote historical prose of rare charm and excellence. Hume, Robertson, and Edward Gibbon were prominent figures.

Political prose: Edmund Burke and Bolingbroke were the important political writers. Most of their work is characterised by political insight.

Prose fiction: The 18th century can be regarded as the age of fiction. For the first time, seasoned novelists gave to English novel a form and a shape. The best works of Richardson, Fielding, Smollett, Sterne — the four wheels of the English novel — were
produced in this period. The Gothic romancers of the age, Mrs Ann Radcliffe, Horace Walpole and Mathew Gregory Lewis produced romanticism in fiction which was further carried forward in a different style by Walter Scott.

**Samuel Johnson (1709-1784)**

Johnson was born in Lichfield, Staffordshire, in 1709 as the son of a small book seller. From his childhood Johnson had to struggle against physical deformity and disease. He was a voracious reader and when he entered Oxford he had read more classical authors than had most of the graduates. He had to leave the university on account of his poverty. He had to struggle in the beginning to earn a living. But gradually success came to him steadily. He wrote poems and started two magazines *The Rambler* and *The Idler*.

His literary labours were rewarded when he received a pension at the age of 53. He founded the Literary Club in which all the great literary men and politicians of the time were members. His greatness lies in the *Dictionary of the English Language* which is a great contribution to scholarship. He was a great critic too. *The Lives of the Poets* and *Preface to Shakespeare* are examples. He died in 1784.

**The Rambler; The Idler**

These magazines follow the tradition of the Spectator. The essays deal with a great variety of subjects and the treatment was serious. The papers which appeared twice a week are full of deep thoughts and observations of Dr Johnson. Their aim is didactic. More of classicism is to be found in Johnson's essays. The periodicals re-established the periodical essay, at a time when it was in danger of being superseded by the newspaper.

**The Dictionary**

In 1749 Dr Johnson began the *Dictionary of the English language* and completed it in 8 years. It is the first ambitious attempt at an English lexicon. It has its weakness; it was a poor guide to pronunciation, the etymology was inaccurate. For the first time, authorities, for the actual use of words, were quoted. It was introduced by a very fine preface setting forth his lofty aims to preserve the purity and ascertain the meaning of our English idiom and prevent the language from being overrun with 'cant' and Gallicized words. The dictionary registers and concentrates the intellectualisation of the language effected by a whole century of analysis and logical effort. It remains, however, a monument of industry and intellectual conscience.

**Dr Johnson as a critic**

His fame as a critic of literature rests on *The Lives of Poets* and *Preface to Shakespeare*. He belonged to the school of judicial or dogmatic critics. His method as a critic is to pronounce verdicts and judgements according to his understanding and his own personal appreciation of the authors whom he judged. In his criticism he was a neo-classicist and traditionalist, and his critical methods were diametrically opposed to that of the critics of the romantic revival.

**The Lives of Poets**

In this work, Johnson presents the lives and poetic characteristics of English poets from Chaucer to Alexander Pope. This work is his longest and most popular one. In three volumes Johnson gives us biographical and critical studies of fifty-two poets. In this book he gives less space to criticism and more to biography.

**Preface to Shakespeare**

Dr Johnson's *Preface to Shakespeare* was published in 1765. *Preface* is remarkable for its forthright honesty in recognizing Shakespeare's faults and in defending him against the charge of ignoring the classical unities, and for its analysis of the causes of corruption in the text. The book is a landmark, not only in Shakespearean scholarship but also in English criticism as a whole.

All Johnson's gifts are seen at their best in it, the lucidity, the virile energy, the individuality of his style, the unique power of first playing himself on the level of the plain man and then lifting the plain man to his statue, the resolute insistence of life and reason, not learning or ingenuity, as the standard by which books are to be judged.

His limitations as a critic are mainly due to his prejudices. He was led away by prejudice and under the stress of bias failed to appreciate the merits of poets, dramatists and novelists of repute. He wrote so well and because he knew so much of real life. The power of his criticism springs not only from his intellect, but also from his vitality. His prose style has been the object of
much ridicule, epitomized in the popular conception of 'Johnsonese' as pompous, artificial, verbose Prose. Antithesis and Latin diction were conspicuous features of his prose style. It is the most symmetrical as well as one of the most vigorous, of the great prose styles in English.

Johnson's influence on English style was a good one. He confirmed the tradition of order, correctness and lucidity, which had begun with Dryden. He introduced a greater variety of effect, a more complex sentence structure and a more copious diction.

**James Boswell (1740-1795)**

*Life of Johnson* is considered one of the best biographies of the 18th century. This biography, which appeared posthumously, is the best biography of the great literary man. Boswell presents the complete picture of Dr Johnson's bulky, awkward appearance, his brusque, overbearing manner, his portentious voice, his uncouth gesture, and attitudes, his habit of whistling, all these have come down to us, together with the record of a great mass of his conversation and a vivid picture of incisive and comprehensive mind.

The work is the first standard biography and the merit of the book lies in the fact that for the first time we have a faithful record of Johnson with all his faults and merits. It brings us in closer contact with Dr Johnson who influenced the course of literature and life during his times. It is full of anecdotes and conversation. Boswell is too careful a biographer. Modern biographers differ from the technique of Boswell.

They lay importance on selection and dramatic presentation rather than on mere recording of irrelevant facts. In that aspect, Boswell's biography is an ill-assorted mass of work on facts of Dr. Johnson's multifarious personality. In spite of it being out of fashion, it remains one of the outstanding works in the field of biography.

**Contribution of historians in the 18th century**

During the 18th century two Scottish historians David Hume and Robertson, and one English historian, Edward Gibbon, made remarkable contribution to history.

**David Hume (1711-76)**

Hume was the great historian and philosopher of England during the 18th century. His works are *A Treatise of Human Nature; Essays, Moral and Political and The History of England*, in six volumes. He was not a trustworthy historian because he had no access to many authentic documents. He never bothered about exactitude and he never carried the scientific scruple for exactitude two far. His aim was to rise above events, group them, judge them and extract what they had to teach. He possessed a clear and logical mind and a swift and brilliant narrative style. In the history of literature his work is of importance and being the first of the popular and literary histories of the country.

**William Robertson (1721 - 1793)**

Robertson had greater merits than Hume. The reader is struck by his prudence and taste for precision. He created the impression of a very safe mind, fully equipped for the pursuit of truth. His main works are *The History of Scotland, History of the Reign of Emperor Charles V*, and *History of America*. We find in him a judicial and critical spirit as well as a broader and more philosophic outlook.

**Tobias Smollett (1721 - 1771)**

He wrote *The History of England*. The work was quickly written. His work in clear and lively and it is because of his realism and penetrating Psychology that his history makes an interesting reading.

**Edward Gibbon (1737-94)**

He was the great historian of England during the 18th century. *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* (1777) in 6 volumes is his masterpiece. It ranks as one of the greatest of historical works. It is an example of what a history ought to be. Gibbon treats the history of Rome from the second century to the end of the fifth and then follows the Byzantine empire, until the fall of Constantinople. In time it covers more than a
thousand years, in scope it includes all the nations of Europe. The subject is the revolution of a world order. He was completely master of his subject and treatment of his theme is so discriminating and thorough that he cannot be superseded.

**Edmund Burke (1729-97)**

Burke was a famous Irish orator, historian, scholar and political writer. His philosophic writings are *A Vindication of Natural Society*, and *The Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful*. His political writings mainly concerned with the American Revolution, Warren Hastings and the French Revolution. He was a practical politician applying to the problems of his day the light of a clear and forcible intelligence. He was a great orator and his speeches were remarkable for their political wisdom, statelessness and rhetorical power. His prose style is characterised by proportion, dignity and harmony. He has the tendency and capacity of building up an argument of a picture by a succession of complementary strokes leading one on the other. Rhetoric, in his hand, assumes a great force; amplification becomes superb and declamation reaches its perfection.

**Memoir writing**

Memoir literature enjoyed a greater vogue in France than in England. The most famous series of letters of this period have a common character. They express in the field of familiar moralising or of the worldly intercourse, the spirit of a society eager for truth, greed, for pleasure, cosmopolitan in taste, secretly distasteful or hostile with regard to any enthusiasm or any rigorous discipline. The prominent writers are Lady Montague, Philipstanhope, Robert Walpole, Horace Walpole, Junius etc.

Horace Walpole's memoirs give a highly satirical picture of court life during the reign of George II. He was a witty, satirical letter writer. Stanhop's *Letters to His Son* is the advice tendered to his son of seven, is not meant for him but is the expression of his own views and disburdening of his own heart.

- *Lives of Poets and Preface to Shakespeare* are works by — Dr Samuel Johnson
- —— was an important political writer of the eighteenth century.
  - Edmund Burke
- *The Castle of Ortranto* is a Gothic novel by
  - Horace Walpole
- The magazines, *The Rambler* and *The Idler*, were started by
  - Dr Johnson
- *The Rambler* and *The Idler* followed the tradition of
  - The Spectator
- Goldsmith's work which is in the form of a series of letters from a philosophical Chinaman.
  - The Citizen of the World
- *Life of Johnson* is the biography of the great critic by
  - James Boswell
- Who is the author of *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*?
  - Edward Gibbon
- —— was a famous Irish orator, historian, political writer and his prominent work is *A Vindication of Natural Society*.
  - Edmund Burke

**Origin and rise of the English novel**

Of all the major literary forms, the novel is of recent origin. But the germs of the novel lay in medieval romance, a fantastic tale of love and adventure. In 1350, Boccaccio wrote *Decameron*, a world famous collection of love stories in prose. Such short stories are called in Italian "novelle" which meant a novel or fresh story but gradually it signified a story in prose as distinguished from a story in verse usually called a 'romance'. When prose became the universal medium, 'romance' came to signify a story or series of stories of the legendary past. Malory's *Morte de Arthur* is an example. It is the loosest literary form having full freedom of a full representation of real life and character. It is a very effective medium for the portrayal of human thought and action.
Many Elizabethans wrote prose works of fiction similar to that of the novel. They are Lyly's *Euphues*, Thomas Lodge's *Rosalynde* and Sidney's *Arcadia*. They were all romances. The realistic element became prominent in Thomas Nashe's *The Unfortunate Traveller*. Bunyan's *The Pilgrim's Progress* has in it many elements of novel proper. Robinson *Crusoe* Defoe produced the first English novel of genius. It can be described as a 'picaresque' novel like *Don Quixote* of Cervantes. Swift's *Gulliver's Travels* is also a work of fiction.

The English novel was almost an off shoot of the periodical essay. Addison and Steele presented imaginary characters like sir Roger de Coverley. In the first half of the 18th century, the novel acquired its modern form. The first English novel *Pamela* was written by Richardson in the form of letters Henry Fielding wrote *Joseph Andrews* as a parody of *Pamela*. *Tom Jones* is Fielding's masterpiece. Fielding's contribution to English prose fiction is substantial. He is out and out a realist. The next great pillar of the English novel was Laurence Sterne. His *Tristram Shandy* was a forerunner in using stream of consciousness method which is practised by 20th century novelists. Smollett's novels deal with sea life. Gothic novel, born in Germany, was introduced in England by Horace Walpole and Mrs Radcliffe. Gothic novels deal with horror and mystery. It was transplanted to America by Edgas Allen Poe.

Among the later novelists, Oliver Goldsmith deserves special mention for his brilliant studies in character, easy, innate style in *The Vicar of Wakefield*, which became a model for writers of victorian prose fiction. Dr. Johnson used the novel as a vehicle for moral philosophy in his *Rasselas* Fanny Burney established the advent of women novelists with her *Evelina* in 1778.

**Novel in the 18th Century**

Eighteenth century novel begins with Richardson and ends with the coming of Jane Austen.

**Samuel Richardson (1689-1761)**

He was the first of the great novelists of the 18th century. He was a spokesman of his own times and imparted a new tone and touch to English fiction. He made a close study of the feminine heart and revealed it in his novels. He emphasized the cultivation of moral virtues and became a moralistic novelist. He laid emphasis on sensibility and sentiment, and introduced pathos in his novels. He was all serious. He sought his plots in the middle class life. He brushed aside the paraphernalia of romance and brought in realism. His greatest ability lies in characterisation. His important works are *Pamela*, *Clarissa Harlowe* and *Sir Charles Glandison*.

**Henry Fielding (1707-1754)**

Fielding introduced solid and plausible realism in his novels. He sought to present a realistic picture of society as he witnessed around him, with all its follies, foibles, and weaknesses. He aimed to be a reformer and a moralist and made efforts to purge off the evils rampant in the society. His weapons were irony, satire, and scathing criticism. The fame of Fielding rests on his four novels *Joseph Andrews, Jonathan Wild, Tom Jones* and *Amelia*.

**Tobias Smollett**

Smollett added satiric caricatures to the novel. He has a certain waspishness of character which finds an expression in all his novels. He has a knack for presenting sarcastic and boisterous picture of life and he was drawn more towards ugliness and evil than towards goodness and faithfulness in his novels. He was obviously obsessed with dirt. He had a descriptive and narrative gift and his picture of sea-life was unparalleled in English literature. His fame as a novelist rests on *Rodrick Random, The Adventures of Sir Lancelot Greaves, Humphry Clinker*.

**Laurence Sterne (1713-1768)**

He opposed sentiment to reason, sensation to reflection. He did not care for the regular development of the plot. He introduced the impressionistic method of story telling which was later popularised by James Joyce and others. He delineated humorous characters. He carried forward the sentimentality of Richardson. His major works are *The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy, Gent* and *A Sentimental Journey Through France and Italy*.

**Oliver Goldsmith**

Goldsmith introduced the subject of domestic life and happy fire side as the subject of fiction. His entire contribution to novel rests only on one novel *The Vicar of Wakefield*. It is a benign comedy of do-
mesticity and human character. He pointed out idea-
lised picture of country side in his novel. He followed
the direct method of narration through the principal
character of the hero. He laid emphasis on the story and
characterization. His characters were life-like and had
force in them. He contributed much to the pathetic vein
in the novel. Satire, morality, reformative zeal was also
there in his work.

**Pamela**

It is the first English novel written by Richardson
in the form of letters. It consists of a series of familiar
letters from a young beautiful girl to her parents. So it is
an epistolery novel. It has a sub-title *Virtue Rewarded.*
The story is very simple. Pamela, a virtuous maid ser-
vant resists the attempts of seduction by the son of her
late land lady. Finally, a proposal of marriage comes
from his and it is accepted. *Pamela* is part of a trilogy
alongwith Clarissa Harlowe and Sir Charles Grandison.

**Factors that led to the rapid growth of novel in
the 18th century.**

Factors that led to the rapid growth of novel are
the decline of drama, rise of the periodical essay of
Addison and Steele, and the availability of material need-
ed for the development of novel. Horace Walpole was
the first great Gothic romancer and his monumental work
is *The Castle of Otranto.* It was professed to be a trans-
lation of a medieval Italian Romance. In it he painted
the life and manners of the feudal period. Impossibilities
for the sake of horror are introduced in the novel. Origin-
ally he aimed to find a middle way between medieval ro-
mance and the matter-of-fact novel.

**Pantomime:** Pantomime became popular in the 18th
century. Rich, a theatre manager, found it very
profitable and produced several pantomimes which
attracted popular attraction. It is acting without
speech, using only posture, gesture, bodily
movement and exaggerated facial expression to
mine (mimic) a character's actions and to express a
character's feelings. Rich's pantomimes were
puppet shows. Later on Fielding satirised them in
his novels. A steep decline followed and the vogue
of writing pantomimes came to an end.

**Opera**: Opera in Italian style was also cultivated in
18th century. By far the best of the ballad - operas
was Gay's *Beggar's Opera,* and *The Dragon of
Wantley* by Henry Carey. Operas were
characterised by humorous scenes, pretty songs,
rollicking fun, and clever dialogues.

**Burlesque:** Burlesque is a kind of satirical play in
which the spirit of true comedy is presented in a
satirical manner. 18th century writers excelled in
writing Burlesque. Carey's *The Tragedy of
Chronohotonthologos,* Henry Fielding's *The
Tragedy of Tragedies,* or *The Life and Death of
Tom Thumb the Great* were popular.

**Farce** : Farce is a low type of comedy, replete with
ludicrous situations, deficient in plot -
construction, and sober characters. The aim of the
farce writers is to produce hoarse laughter and
tickle the fancies of the audience so that through
the play there may be fun and nothing else. The
most prolific writers of the farcial comedy were
Samuel Foote, Fielding, George Colman etc.

**Daniel Defoe** (1661-1731) : The real beginning of the
English novel took place in the 18th century with the
work of Daniel Defoe. His *Robinson Crusoe* has held
its popularity undiminished for nearly two hundred
and fifty years. The hero represents the whole of
human society, doing with his own hands, all the
things which by the division of labour and demands
of modern civilization are now done by many.

**Adam Smith** (1723-90) : Smith's famous book *The
Wealth of Nations*, written in 1776, is looked upon as the
foundation of political economy as a science. It laid
the foundations of modern economic theory.

**Thomas Gray** (1716-1771) : In Gray's "letters", which
are infinitely various, we can read the whole story
of his life and personality. They are full of
scholarship, wisdom and wit in the best sense of
the word.

**William Cowper** (1731-1800) : His *Letters* are perhaps
the best in the language, being absolutely natural,
graceful and frank. He had the gift to making
trivialities interesting in easy and attractive style.

John Lyly's *Euphues,* Thomas Lodge's *Rosalynde*
and Sidney's *Arcadia* could be collectively
categorised as

- Romances
Name Daniel Defoe's novel which is picaresque in nature
- *Robinson Crusoe*

Who is the author of *Pamela*, the first English novel?
- *Richardson*

Henry Fielding wrote a parody of *Pamela* entitled
- *Joseph Andrews*

Name Laurence Sterne's novel, which is regarded as the forerunner of the stream of consciousness novel practised by writers of the 20th century.
- *Tristram Shandy*

Gothic novel, which had its beginning in Germany, was introduced in England by
- *Horace Walpole*

——— is the masterpiece of Henry Fielding.
- *Tom Jones*

Gothic novels are characterised by
- *horror and mystery*

Who is credited with the introduction of Gothic fiction in America?
- *Edgar Allan Poe*

*Amelia and Jonathan Wild* are novels by
- *Henry Fielding*

*A Sentimental Journey through France and Italy* is the work of
- *Laurence Sterne*

Which novel of Richardson is sub-titled as *Virtue Rewarded*?
- *Pamela*

——— is acting without speech, using only posture, gesture, bodily movement and exaggerated facial expression to mimic a character's actions.
- *Pantomime*

Who is the author of the *Wealth of Nations* which is regarded as the foundation of political economy?
- *Adam Smith*