

:: STRUCTURE ::**5.0 Objective****5.1 Introduction****5.2 Historical Survey of English Literature**

- Check your progress-1

5.3 The Contemporary Age

- Check your progress-2

5.4 Contemporary Prose

- Check your progress-3

5.5 Contemporary Poetry

- Check your progress : 4

5.6 Contemporary Fiction

- Check your progress-5

5.7 Contemporary Drama**5.8 The Major Characteristics of Contemporary Literature****5.9 Major Modernist Writers****5.10 Let Us Sum Up****5.11 Key Words****5.12 Books Suggested****Answers**

5.0 OBJECTIVE

In this unit, we shall learn about

- the contemporary age with the help of British Literature written mostly after 1945
- A historical survey of English Literature in a nutshell.
- The difference between various genres of English Literature.
- The major writers of the era.

After completing the Unit, you should be able to

- Understand the British Literature of contemporary time period
- Understand the socio political background of the period from 1945 onwards
- Understand the major writers and their contribution in literature

5.1 INTRODUCTION

Contemporary age in literature can be understood or explained in terms of genres. So this module separately discusses Modern Prose, Poetry, Drama and Fiction. Contemporary Age, in English-language historiography denotes the period known as historical period from approximately 1945 to the present. Sometimes we also use the term modern, which was coined in the 16th century to indicate present or recent times. The European Renaissance (started in Italy) marked the transition between the late middle age and early modern times. It was strengthened by the rediscovery of classical art and literature which resulted in expanding the scope of literature in real sense.

5.2 HISTORICAL SURVEY OF ENGLISH LITERATURE

English, as we know it, descends from the language spoken by the North Germanic tribes who settled in England from the 5th century A.D. onwards. The earliest written works in Old English were probably composed orally at first. By the time literacy becomes widespread, Old English is effectively a foreign and dead language. From 1066 onwards, the language is known to scholars as Middle English. Ideas and themes from French and Celtic literature appeared in English writing around this time, but the first great name in English literature is that of Geoffrey Chaucer (?1343-1400). Chaucer introduces the iambic pentameter line, the rhyming couplet and other rhymes used in Italian poetry and his greatest work is mostly narrative poetry, which we find in *Troilus and Criseyde* and *The Canterbury Tales*. The Middle English period sees a huge transition in the language, culture, and lifestyle of England and results in what we can recognize today as a form of “modern” (recognizable) English. This period is home to the likes of Chaucer, Thomas Malory, and Robert Henryson. “Renaissance”, (1500–1660) also known as ‘Early Modern Period’ is often subdivided into four parts, including the Elizabethan Age (1558–1603), the Jacobean Age (1603–1625), the Caroline Age (1625–1649), and the Commonwealth Period (1649–1660). The Neoclassical period (1600–1785) is also subdivided into ages, including The Restoration (1660–1700), The Augustan Age (1700–1745), and The Age of Sensibility (1745–1785). The Romantic Period (1785–1832) began in 1789 with the start of the French Revolution, but some also believe that 1798, the publication year for William Wordsworth and Samuel Taylor Coleridge’s book *Lyrical Ballads*, is its true beginning. The time period ends with the passage of

the Reform Bill (which signalled the Victorian Era) and with the death of Sir Walter Scott. The Victorian Period (1832–1901) was a time of great social, religious, intellectual, and economic issues, heralded by the passage of the Reform Bill, which expanded voting rights. This period is in strong contention with the Romantic period for being the most popular, influential, and prolific period in all of English (and world) literature.

The Edwardian Period (1901–1914) includes incredible classic novelists such as Joseph Conrad, Ford Madox Ford, Rudyard Kipling, H.G. Wells, and Henry James (who was born in America but who spent most of his writing career in England), notable poets such as Alfred Noyes and William Butler Yeats, as well as dramatists such as James Barrie, George Bernard Shaw, and John Galsworthy. It was followed by The Georgian Period (1910-1936)

Literature in the modern era combines many traits different from the literature of previous age. Still modernism combines revolutionary and reactionary elements just like Romanticism. Among Modernism's a distance can be seen between high art in perpetual revolution from established forms appealing to an elite audience, and low or popular art appealing to base instincts and non-discriminating tastes of commoners.

In the modern era painting inspired literature and literature inspired visual media. For example Sylvia Plath's poem *The Disquieting Muses* (1957) was inspired by De Chirico's painting (1918). The unsettling mood of De Chirico's painting is not only matched but heightened in Sylvia Plath's disturbing poem in which she imagines her childhood self-haunted by three faceless muses, who recall the Three Fates of classical mythology, as well as other trios of sinister women from myth and literature.

The processes of decolonization and the events of two great World Wars together created a foggy air on the economic welfare of the nation. The contemporary cultural artefacts mirrored the social events at the time. Sir Winston Churchill described the great War and its effects on England in the six volumes of *The Second World War* between 1948-53. A large number of anti-war books were written during and after the two World Wars. So due to this the twentieth century was also known as the age of Interrogation and Anxiety. Man's faith in the authority of religion and church and the established order was shaken by the scientific revolution. The challenge to faith is one of the key characteristics in modern literature.

One critical aspect of modern literature in English is that it is characterized by a process of cross-fertilization of ideas, images, symbols and experiences. Individuality and the narration of subjectivity constitute for the modern writer a major preoccupation. It is in such a context that the 'modern' acquired a tradition of its own –it was part of an ethos that owed to conventions and practices of the past, some of

which were radicalized to conform to the innovative worldviews of the modern artists. New psychological researches influenced literature. Freud put great emphasis on the power of the unconscious to affect conduct. As a result, literature sought new ways of expressions and style.

Instead being a reflection of a universal tendency or pattern, the modern artist's exploration of the experience of modernity became an extremely individual and isolated experience. Intellectual convictions appeared to be rationalizations of emotional needs. The new theories of psychology and sex gave rise to the stream of consciousness novel. D.H Lawrence, Virginia Woolf and many others were influenced by new researches in these fields. Marxism also influenced the authors of this period. The changes in the cultural matrices also formed an important part of the modern experience. The modern literature was thus a combined coming of responses to the 'new in culture, society, science and technology. Ideologies were announced and in fact there was a celebration in the departures that each movement made, whether it was the short-lived Imagism in poetry or the reorientation of speed and modern technology in the manifesto of Futurism. Dadaism and Surrealism were denials of the conventional idea of civilizational progress. The sense of community that so evocatively defined the sense of the worlds of Thomas Hardy or Charles Dickens was no longer part of the modern writer's repertoire of dominant themes. With the changes in living standards and the transformation of everyday life, there was also a corresponding change in the way the artists responded to them; in many cases, the manifestation was structured in the manner of a feeling of deep anxiety and a violation of orderly conduct.

With new theories of human existence arriving one after another, it became very difficult for the modern individual to ignore stress and anxiety, which were defining features in the work of many modern writers. Since the influences from various quarters and agencies were confronting man with such rapidity, it was inevitable that the responses to such stimuli were not coordinated to present a unified face. The multiplicity of movements and the variety of individual responses testify this characteristic of modern literature. The avant-garde became one of the norms in a culture where it was impossible to accept the tradition of the past in its received forms. Within a very short period, the modern condition created a tradition of its own, which in spite of being wide-ranging celebrated diversity as well.

The innovative features of many of the modern movements thus owe this tendency to the acknowledgement that all experiences cannot conform to familiar structures. One way of approaching the innovations attempted in the modern age is to see the age as one of

crisis, for the newness that is so often associated with the modern is also a sign of insecurity. However, the modern tradition of the early twentieth century was, thus not universalized as some kind of a credo, but amalgamated to demonstrate the functioning of the complexities of the modern condition.

- **Check your progress.1**

In the sentences below, write your answers in the blank spaces. You may check your answers with those given at the end of the unit.

- i. Words from which language began to enter English vocabulary around the time of the Norman Conquest in 1066? -----
- ii. Which of the sixteenth-century works of English literature was translated into the English language after its first publication in Latin?-----

- iii. Who introduced the art of printing into England? -----
- iv. Who applied the term "Romantic" to the literary period dating from 1785 to 1830? -----
- v. Which poets collaborated on the Lyrical Ballads of 1798? -----
- vi. Which poetic form became the most popular Romantic poetic form, following on Wordsworth's claim that poetic inspiration is contained within the inner feelings of the individual poet as "the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings"?-----
- vii. Who remarked, 'Spenser write no language.'
- viii. Who said that ' It is not rhyming and versing that maketh a poet no more than a long gown maketh an advocate.'

5.3 THE CONTEMPORARY AGE

The contemporary age starts with the modern period and assimilates the Postmodern period as well. The modern period traditionally applies to works written after the initiation of World War I and Postmodern age begins about the time that World War II ended. Contemporary literature reflects current trends in life and culture. Common features include bold experimentation with subject matter, style, and form, encompassing narrative, verse, and drama. W.B. Yeats' words, "Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold" are often referred to when describing the core tenet or "feeling" of modernist concerns. Some of the most notable writers of this period, among many, include the novelists James Joyce, Virginia Woolf, Aldous Huxley, D.H. Lawrence, Joseph Conrad, Dorothy Richardson, Graham Greene, E.M. Forster, and Doris Lessing; the poets W.B. Yeats, T.S. Eliot, W.H. Auden, Seamus Heaney, Wilfred Owens, Dylan Thomas, and Robert Graves; and the dramatists Tom Stoppard, George Bernard Shaw, Samuel Beckett, Frank McGuinness, Harold Pinter, and Caryl Churchill. New Criticism also appeared at this time, led by the likes of Woolf, Eliot, William Empson, and others, which strengthened literary criticism in general. It is difficult to say whether modernism has

ended, though we know that postmodernism has developed after and from it; for now, the genre remains ongoing. Poststructuralist literary theory and criticism also developed to a great length during this time.

Contemporary literature features a somewhat modern narrative, but it also contains a harsher reality. Well-defined, realistic, and highly developed characters are important in classifying a written work as contemporary, and most writing in this category features stories that are more character driven than plot driven. Typical characteristics of the contemporary period include reality-based stories with strong characters and a rational story. Settings usually keep to the current or modern era, so futuristic and science fiction novels are rarely included in this category.

Indeed, a central preoccupation of Contemporary age is with the inner self and consciousness. A break with traditions is one of the fundamental constants of the Modernist stance. In contrast to the Romantic world view, the Contemporary literature was not so much concerned for Nature and Being. The writers of Contemporary age sees decay and a growing alienation of the individual due to rapid industrialization. The machinery of modern society is perceived as impersonal, capitalist, and antagonistic to the artistic impulse. Two World Wars most certainly influenced on such ways of approaching the world.

- **Check your progress : 2**

In the sentences below, find the most suitable answers out of the given options. You may check your answers with those given at the end of the unit.

1] Which of the following phrases best characterizes the late-nineteenth century aesthetic movement which widened the breach between artists and the reading public, sowing the seeds of modernism?

- a. Art for art sake
- b. Art for life's sake
- c. Art for morality's sake
- d. None of the above

2. Which of the following are common conventions of postmodern literary writing?

- a. Straightforward plots and realistic situations
- b. Clear and obvious meanings
- c. A respect for previous literary styles and conventions
- d. Metafiction and intertextuality

3. Which statement is true **for Postmodern literature**?

- a. Sexism and overly complicated plots
- b. Lack of engagement with social and historical issues
- c. Lack of creativity and experimentation
- d. It lacks coherence and is hostile to the notion of absolutes, such as truth.

4. The fact of two things being seen or placed close together with contrasting effect is referred to as
- a juxtaposition
 - a stream of consciousness
 - a monologue
 - a free verse script
5. Contemporary Literature was accompanied by
- a personal cynicism,
 - disappointment,
 - frustration and lack of expectation.
 - all of the above

- **Write your answers of the following questions in 100 words. Two are done for you.**

Q1. Define Postmodern literature.

Answer. Postmodern literature refers to describe certain characteristics of post– World War II literature for example using fragmentation, paradox etc. Postmodern literature, like postmodernism as a whole, cannot be defined in exact terms but it is closely connected with Jean-François’s concept of the "metanarrative" and "little narrative", Jacques Derrida's concept of "play", and Jean Baudrillard's "simulacra."

The postmodern writer disdains often playfully, the possibility of meaning, and the postmodern novel is often a parody of this quest. ‘Postmodern writers often celebrate chance over craft and employ metafiction to undermine the author's "univocation" (the existence of narrative primacy within a text, the presence of a single all-powerful storytelling authority).’

Q2. What are the differences between ‘modern’ and ‘post-modern’ or ‘contemporary’ literature?

Answer. Both modern and postmodern literature represent a break from 19th century realism. In character development, both modern and postmodern literature explore subjectivism, turning from external reality to examine inner states of consciousness, in many cases drawing on modernist examples in the "stream of consciousness" styles of Virginia Woolf and James Joyce, or poems like *The Waste Land* by T. S. Eliot. *The Waste Land* is often used to distinguish modern and postmodern literature.’

Q.3. Define the term Avant-garde

Q.4. Identify nine stylistic techniques that are often used in postmodern literature.

Q.5. List three major influences the way literature influenced the contemporary culture.

5.4 CONTEMPORARY PROSE

Contemporary or postmodernist literature does not refer to everything written in the postmodern period. But the Theatre of the Absurd, the Beat Generation, and Magic Realism have significant similarities. Writers like Samuel Beckett, William S. Burroughs, Jorge Luis Borges, Julio Cortázar and Gabriel García Márquez are mentioned as significant contributors to the postmodern creation.

Contemporary prose flourished during and after the 1940s. Prose is realistic in nature and is well defined. It presents characters in realistic situation which could allure the scientific brains. To be specific; the prose is ironic and reflects current political, social and personal issues. The chief characteristic is that the literature may reflect a growing scepticism in the existence of God as well as distrust or lack of faith in traditional institutions.

- **Check your progress-3**

Q.1 Write true or false against the statements

- a. Magic Realism is a technique popular among Latin American writers (and can also be considered its own genre) in which supernatural elements are treated as mundane ()
- b. Contemporary prose is free from irony and undue satire.()
- c. Contemporary prose mainly dealt with reality-based stories with strong characters and a believable story.()
- d. Samuel Beckett, William S. Burroughs, Jorge Luis Borges, Julio Cortázar and Gabriel García Márquez wrote both prose and poetry in similar way.()
- e. There is no similarity between Theatre of the Absurd and Magic Realism.()

5.5 CONTEMPORARY POETRY

If we evaluate all contemporary poetry in the sense of the modernist literary movement, We cannot consider everything as "modern". So Modern and contemporary poetry cannot replace each other. Contemporary poetry is known for its special characteristics. Probable subjects for poetry were now infinite, and poets enjoyed this new freedom while composing their work of art. Stream of consciousness, free verse, and the preference for suggestion or ambiguity of ideas are common trends for contemporary poetry.

The first major change came in the writing of the group known as the War poets, whose compositions reflect their responses to the experiences of war. The First World War was a major political as well as a cultural event that demanded immediate responses from the poets. These war poets used the experience of battle to situate and depict conditions of reality. They include Rupert Brooke, Siegfried Sassoon, Isaac Rosenberg and Wilfred Owen. Eliot developed the urbane culture, which forms such an integral part of 'The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock,' further in his classic *The Waste Land* where he presents the angst, corruption, and materialism of modernist society within the frame of a quest that draws on various cultural structures. The Thirties' Poets which include W. H. Auden, Stephen Spender and Cecil Day Lewis swerved towards political ideologies. This group is placed midway between the new voices of the post-War literary scene and the Eliot led brand of high Modernist poetics.

Thomas Stearns Eliot, the most acclaimed modernist poet is known for creating an atmosphere to return to highly intellectual, allusive poetry. T.S. Eliot, tended to favour intellect over emotion, and valued themes of alienation and isolation as reactions to the romanticism. Eliot's composition were entirely in the modern style because he was never nostalgic about the past and he effortlessly moves from very high, formal verse into a more conversational and easy style. Yet even when his poetic voice sounds very colloquial, there is a current underneath, which hides secondary meanings. It is this layering of meanings and contrasting of styles that mark Modernist poetry in general and T. S. Eliot in particular. Undoubtedly, Eliot was the pioneer of the ironic mode in poetry with a purpose to present deceptive appearance hiding common truths.

Contemporary poetry was also hailed as it favoured Experimentation with genre and form. In it, one is confronted by biblical-sounding verse forms, quasi-conversational interludes, dense and frequent references which frustrate even the most well-read readers, and sections that resemble prose more than poetry.

• **Check your progress : 4**

Q.1 Choose the correct answer out of the given answers.

1. Which of the following is true regarding the free verse methodology?
A. It is exemplified in T.S. Eliot's 'The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock'.
B. It uses no set line length.
C. It uses no set rhyming scheme.
D. All of these answers are correct.

2. Difference between poetry and poem was emphasized by which famous writer mentioned below?

- A. Coleridge,
B. Addison,
C. Arnold,
D. Eliot

3. From where did Eliot borrow the original title for The Waste Land, He Do the Police In Different Voices?

- A. A popular music hall song
B. James Joyce's Finnegans Wake
C. Mark Twain's Huckleberry Finn
D. Charles Dickens's Our Mutual Friend

4. Which popular nursery rhyme is mentioned at the end of The Waste Land?

- A. Ring-a-roses
B. London Bridge is Falling Down
C. Humpty Dumpty
D. Jack and Jill

Q.2 Write a short note on the following in about 100 words. First one is done for you.

1. What is Contemporary poetry?

Ans. Contemporary poetry is usually defined as poetry written around early 1940s. It follows a specific series of traits and literary tools like inconsistent meter, variations upon standard rhyme and poetic lines, abandonment of a classical —musical style, and an otherwise inconsistent regard for standard poetic structure. Contemporary poetry is also known as free verse. It gave a sense of freedom to the poets, which they enjoyed.

2. Who is the most acclaimed poet of contemporary age? How did he gain his place in the literary world?-

Q3-What are the various characteristics of Contemporary poetry? Is the exactly the same as modern poetry?

5.6 CONTEMPORARY FICTION

Reflective impulses of the Contemporary age affected the contemporary fiction as well. Modernism introduced a new and a unique kind of narration to the fiction, which changed the entire essence of novel writing. The “unreliable” narrator replaced the well informed and wise, trustworthy narrator of previous centuries. Stream of Consciousness became the buzz word. “Stream of consciousness” was introduced to survey the inner space of the human mind. At the same time, the psychoanalytic theories of Sigmund Freud had come into mainstream acceptance. These two forces worked together to alter people’s basic understanding of what constituted truth and reality. James Joyce’s *Ulysses* is the best example.

It may be argued that the modern moment in English fiction was brought about by the writings of Joseph Conrad, especially his *Lord Jim*(1900) and *Heart of Darkness*(1902).

The possibilities suggested by Conrad were taken further by Virginia Woolf and James Joyce.

Joyce’s novel has become a cult text of modern literature. All the writers of fiction in the modern age did not necessarily offer radical revisions of the narrative mode. D. H. Lawrence relied more on the thematic evocation of the modern experience rather than narrative jugglery to further his thesis of modernity. They spoke of the inner self and consciousness. Irony, satire, and comparisons were often employed to point out society’s ills. A short list of some of famous Modernist writers includes Samuel Beckett, James Joyce, Joseph Conrad, T.S. Eliot, William Faulkner, John Steinbeck, E.E. Cummings, Sylvia Plath, F. Scott Fitzgerald, William Butler Yeats, Ezra Pound, Ernest Hemingway, Virginia Woolf, D.H. Lawrence, and Gertrude Stein.

- **Check your progress-5**

Q.1 Answer in brief.(50 words)First one is done for you.

1. Who introduced Stream of Consciousness?

William James introduced Stream of Consciousness. The term was coined by William James in 1890 in his *The Principles of Psychology*, and in 1918 the novelist May Sinclair (1863–1946) first applied the term stream

of consciousness, in a literary context, when discussing Dorothy Richardson's (1873–1957) novels.

2. Discuss in brief the influence of Freud on the stream of consciousness?

3. Name the major novelists of contemporary age.

Q.2 Choose the most suitable answer out of the given answers.

1. All of these writers rely on a new form of literary style made popular throughout the era, called 'stream-of-consciousness', as a principal tool throughout their writings, except for

- a. William Faulkner
- b. Joseph Conrad
- c. James Joyce
- d. Virginia Woolf

2. "Make it new" is a maxim of (blank) which modernist writers adhere to experiment novel literary forms and expressions.

- a. Ezra Pound
- b. T S Eliot
- c. Karl Marx
- d. Kafka

3. What made Samuel Beckett, who was considered the last adherent of modernism, start his career as a writer?

- a. Having written his critical essay "Proust"
- b. Having published his tragicomedy play "En attendant Godot"
- c. Having published his novel "Murphy"

4. Who coined the term "Jazz Age"?

- a. Ernest Hemingway
- b. F. Scott Fitzgerald
- c. Louis Armstrong
- d. Ella Fitzgerald

5.7 CONTEMPORARY DRAMA

Drama in this age is essentially a drama of ideas rather than action. The stage is used by dramatists to give expression to certain ideas which they wanted to spread in the society. Realism is the most significant and outstanding quality of the Modern English Drama, popularised by Henrik Ibsen, who is often regarded as the first modernist in the history of European theatre, which is conflated with his placement as a pioneer in terms of the development of realist theatre as well. G. B. Shaw inherited the Ibsenite model and exploited the resources of such theatrical conditioning in his dramatic experiments. Modern British drama was characterized by the appearance of certain movements that attended to demands of specific cultural structures, the two most remarkable examples of such forays being the developments in the Irish theatre and the revival of poetic drama. The notable trend that arrived dramatically on the English theatrical scene after the Second World War was the absurdist experiment initiated by Samuel Beckett.

No doubt, the dramatists were interested in naturalism and it was their endeavour (try) to deal with real problems of life in a realistic technique to their plays. Robertson Arthur Jones, Galsworthy and G. B. Shaw also followed the tradition. Contemporary dramatists used theatre as a means for bringing about reforms in the conditions of society prevailing in their days. Thus Problem Play also gained importance dealing with the problems of marriage, justice, law, administration, and strife etc. T.S. Eliot gave importance to poetic plays and was the realistic prose drama of the modern drama. Stephen Phillips, John Drink Water, Yeats etc were from those who wrote poetic plays. There are many beautiful historical and biographical plays also in modern drama. Shaw's *Caesar* and *Cleopatra* and John Drink Water's *Abraham Lincoln* and *Mary Stuart* are historical plays of great importance.

- **Check Your Progress : 6**

Choose the correct answer.

1. Which of the following is NOT true regarding the Theater of the Absurd?

- It was popularized in 1920s and 1930s theatre.
- It is closely associated with Samuel Beckett.
- It consists of seemingly meaningless and aimless dialogue.
- It is showcased in 'Waiting for Godot'.

2. Regarding 'Waiting for Godot', which of the following statements is not true?

- Waiting for Godot" is not a play to which traditional ideas of plot; action, structure etc. do apply.
- There is double-structure in "Waiting for Godot" linear and cynical.
- It is a one act play which is a bold experiments in use of parallelism.
- Repetition or paradigm is primarily dominant in the play.

3. Which is true about The Theatre of Absurd?

- A. The term "Theatre of the Absurd" was coined by Martin Esslin to describe a tendency in theatre in the 1950s;
- B. Esslin related it to Albert Camus's concept of the absurd.
- C. Both A and B
- D. Neither A nor B.

4. The Problem Play deals with the topics like

- A. Domestic problems only
- B. Problems of labour class only
- C. Problems of the kings and queens.
- D. General social problems people like marriage, justice, law, administration, and strife

5.8 THE MAJOR CHARACTERISTICS OF CONTEMPORARY LITERATURE

Individualism

Writers were more interested in dealing with individuals and their problems rather than dealing just with society. Modernist writers were fascinated with how the individual adapted to the changing world. In some cases, the individual triumphed over obstacles. Ernest Hemingway is especially remembered for vivid characters who accepted their circumstances at face value and persevered.

Experimentation

Modernist writers broke free of old forms and techniques. Poets abandoned traditional rhyme schemes and wrote in free verse. Novelists defied all expectations. Writers mixed images from the past with modern languages and themes, creating a collage of styles.

Absurdity

The bloodshed and slaughter of two World Wars profoundly affected writers of the contemporary age. Several great English poets died or were wounded in WWI. For many writers, the world was becoming a more absurd place every day. Modernist authors depicted this absurdity in their works. Franz Kafka's *The Metamorphosis*, in which a traveling salesman is transformed into an insect-like creature, is an example of modern absurdism.

Symbolism

The Modernist writers infused objects, people, places and events with significant meanings. They imagined a reality with multiple layers, many of them hidden or in a sort of code. They left much more to the reader's imagination than earlier writers, leading to open-ended narratives with multiple interpretations. For example, James Joyce's *Ulysses* incorporates distinctive, open-ended symbols in each chapter.

Formalism

Writers of the Modernist period saw literature more as a craft than a flowering of creativity. The idea of literature as craft fed the Modernists' desire for creativity and originality. Modernist poetry often includes foreign languages, dense vocabulary and invented words.

5.9 MAJOR MODERNIST WRITERS

- Bishop, Elizabeth (1911-1979)
- Conrad, Joseph (1857-1924)
- Doolittle, Hilda (1886-1961)
- Eliot, Thomas Stearns (1888-1965)
- Faulkner, William (1897-1962)
- Fitzgerald, F. Scott (1896-1940)
- Hemingway, Ernest (1899-1961)
- Hughes, Langston (1902-1967)
- James, Henry (1843-1916)
- Lawrence, D. H. (1885-1930)
- Lowell, Amy (1874-1925)
- Pound, Ezra (1885-1972)
- Shaw, George Bernard (1856-1950)
- Stevens, Wallace (1879-1955)
- Williams, Tennessee (1882-1941)
- Woolf, Virginia (1882-1941)
- Yeats, William Butler (1865-1939)

5.10 LET US SUM UP

Artists of this newer generation pursued a more democratic, pluralistic mode for poetry and the novel. The influence of Modernist literature continues to be quite astonishing. The Modern poet-critics changed the way people think about artists and creative pursuits. The Modern novelists changed the way many people perceive truth and reality. Much of the focus in the study of postmodern literature is on intertextuality: the relationship between one text (a novel for example) and another or one text within the interwoven fabric of literary history. Critics point to this as an indication of postmodernism's lack of originality and reliance on clichés. Related to postmodern intertextuality another term known as pastiche came into existence, which means to combine, or "paste" together, multiple elements. In Postmodernist literature this can be an homage to or a parody of past styles. It can be seen as a representation of the chaotic, pluralistic, or information-drenched aspects of postmodern society. The themes and subjects are often imaginary, somewhat outlandish and fantastic and with a certain dream-like quality.

Beyond the traditional cultural artefacts like poetry, drama and fiction, pop music emerged as a major cultural medium in the twentieth century. The Beatles, a popular album released in 1968 is

associated with 'youth culture' and in many ways their work represented the changing climate and the mood of the period. British cinema and television also vividly mirrored the contemporary events. Radio brought literature into the home in the form of broadcast stories, plays and literary discussions. Also, film techniques were the basis of a number of experiments in the novel.

The growth and development of literature is inevitably influenced and conditioned by the mental and moral climate of the period in which it is produced. The invention of locomotive and telegraph, rapid and cheap intercommunication resulted in an intellectual revolution. Printing was multiplied and cheapened. Literacy was no more confined to a cultured minority. As a result of better printing facilities, cheap editions of both classics and modern books were easily available. The improved organization of public libraries, circulating libraries and book clubs made literature accessible to the common public. In short the World Wars, mass commercial leisure, democracy, the welfare state, the economic depression of the 1930s, the post war economic boom, decolonization, women's rights, sexual freedom and consumerism all together formed the cultural and social background of the 20th century.

5.11 KEY WORDS

Iambic pentameter	Iambic pentameter refers to a specific kind of line of poetry. It is concerned with the number of syllables in the line and the emphasis placed on those syllables. Many of Shakespeare's works are often used as great examples of iambic pentameter.
The rhyming couplet	A rhyming couplet means two lines that rhyme with each other. They may also have the same meter, or rhythmic structure in a verse or line.
Individualism	a social theory favouring freedom of action for individuals over collective or state control.
Insurmountable	too great to be overcome.
Poststructuralist	The deconstructionists are also known as poststructuralists. They mean the same thing.
Distinctive feature	In linguistics, a distinctive feature is the most basic unit of phonological structure that may be analysed in phonological theory.
Open-ended symbols	Open ended symbols are a type of Symbolism. Symbolism is a literary device in which a writer uses one thing—usually a physical object or phenomenon—to represent something more abstract. Symbolism allows writers to convey things to their readers poetically or indirectly rather than having to say them

outright, which can make texts seem more nuanced and complex.

Modern Absurdism

"The Absurd" refers to the conflict between the human tendency to seek inherent value and meaning in life and the human inability to find any in a purposeless, meaningless or chaotic and irrational universe. The universe and the human mind do not each separately cause the Absurd, but rather, the Absurd arises by the contradictory nature of the two existing simultaneously.

Post-modern

Post-modern art is permeated by Absurdism. The thoughts cultivated by Samuel Beckett and other early Absurdist writers are relevant in the post-modern world

5.11 BOOKS SUGGESTED

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❖ **Answers**

Check your progress 1.

Answer.1

i)-French

ii. Thomas Moore's Utopia

iii. William Caxton

iv. English historians half a century after the period ended

v. William Wordsworth and Samuel Taylor Coleridge.

vi. The lyric poem written in the first person.

vii. - Ben Jonson

viii. Sidney

Check your progress 2.

1. A

2.D

3.D

4. A

5.D

Check your progress 4

A. True,

B. False

C. True

D. False

E. False

Check your progress 5

1.D, 2.A, 3.D, 4.B

Check your progress 6

1.B, 2.A, 3.A, 4. B

Check your progress 7

1. C

2. C

3. C

4. D