The Restoration and 18th Century
1660 - 1800

THE BEST OF ALL POSSIBLE WORLDS
Oliver Cromwell served for 11 years as Lord Protector with the approval of Parliament.

King James II

*James II* reigned 1685 – 1688; tries to reestablish the Catholic Church.

Charles II crowned in 1660 after nearly 20 years of civil war; reigned until 1685.

Queen Anne reigns from 1702 – 1714

William III reigns 1688 - 1702

George I (a German who could not speak English) reigned from 1710 – 1739

Mary II 1688 -1694
From 1660 – 1800 people began migrating to the new North American colonies to seek freedom – both politically and spiritually, and money from the American continent’s rich lands and forests in furs, tobacco, and logging.

- 1665 – The plague hits England and claims more than 68,000 people in London.

- 1666 – Fire destroys most of London and sends nearly 2/3 of its population into the streets, homeless.

- By the middle of the 1700s, England had been devastated by fire and a plague.
Restoration of Charles II

- Oliver Cromwell, appointed following Charles I’s beheading; served England as Lord Protector with Parliament for eleven years.
- 1658 Oliver dies and his son Richard takes over as Lord Protector – there was a general dissatisfaction with his leadership as Puritan zeal exhausted itself.
- Charles II had been in exile in the Netherlands and was called back to the throne in 1660.
- Charles II was well liked and London once again began to flourish
- The Church of England regained its power and the aristocratic courtier became the model for a more sophisticated age.
- Charles II reestablished the Anglican Church and other sects were outlawed and persecuted. The Protestant’s ruled for more than 20 years and during their tenure the theater’s remained closed; Charles II reopened the theaters and allowed changes such as male actors did not play the female roles, instead women played the parts.
The Glorious Revolution

○ In 1685 Charles II dies without a legitimate heir
○ His brother James II, a catholic, became King. Protestant leaders feared domination by Rome so they quickly transferred power to James’s protestant daughter Mary.
○ Mary’s husband William attacked England and forced James to flee
○ Parliament invited Mary AND William to assume the English throne (the only time in recorded history that England has two rulers).
○ Because there was no bloodshed in the battle between William and James it is referred to as the Glorious Revolution or the Bloodless Revolution of 1688.
○ This also increased the status and power of Parliament. Since then Parliament has played a prominent part in British politics and has exercised a democratic influence on the monarchy
Other Monarchs

- **Queen Anne of Great Britain** (Mary II younger sister) reigned from 1702 – 1714; first sovereign monarch under the Acts of the Union 1707 which united England and Scotland as a single state (the Kingdom of Great Britain).

- **George I** (a German who could not speak English) reigned from 1714 – 1739; he is the closet living Protestant relative to Anne; during his reign, the powers of monarchy began a transition to the modern system of Cabinet government led by a Prime Minister. Toward the end of his reign actual power was held by Sir Robert Walpole, the de facto Prime Minister.
What’s in a Name

During this long time period several labels were used:

- The Augustan Age
- The Neoclassical Period
- The Enlightenment
- The Age of Reason

Each label applies to some characteristics but none applies to all.
Augustan and Neoclassical:

- Many people looked for similarities between England and ancient Rome during this time period as they had centuries before; this is where several of the aliases come from.
- Both the English and Romans had become weary of war, suspicious of revolutionaries and radicals, and were ready to settle down, make money, and enjoy life.
- English writers began modeling their work after the old Latin classics and it was generally agreed they (the old Latin classics) were valuable because they represented what was permanent and universal in human experience.
Reason and Enlightenment

- People stopped asking “Why” and began asking “How” about the various events of life: from the workings of the human body to the laws of the universe.
- For centuries people believed the earth and sky gave warnings before a great public disaster like an assassination.
- During this time people began asking HOW instead of Why. Science became much less frightening and superstitious.
- Astronomer Edmond Halley took the terror out of celestial phenomena by calculating when they were to occur. Halley’s Comet reoccurs every 76 years.

The Birth of Modern English Prose

- 1662 – Charles II chartered a group of philosophers: The Royal Society of London for the Promotion of Natural Knowledge—they were called to write things that were precise, exact, and not decorated with the elaborate metaphors or odd allusions of their predecessors; they were called to shorten the sentences and in doing so brought about what we now refer to as the modern English prose.

- John Dryden was the founder and first true master; he wrote All for Love – a tragedy similar to Shakespeare’s Antony and Cleopatra; he was known for regularizing meter in poetry and making diction precise.
Religion and Politics

- Scientific and rational explanations of phenomena gradually began to affect some people’s religious views.

- Deism was a spiritual belief based on reason and the observation of nature.
  - The idea that the universe was an immense piece of clockwork set in motion by a Creator who more or less withdrew and let it run on its own

- Christianity continued to exercise an undiminished power over almost all of Europeans in this period, just as it had during the Middle Ages and Renaissance.

- Religion determined people’s religion as Charles II reestablished the Anglican Church as the official church of the country (in the US this is the Episcopal Church). With the approval of Parliament, the king attempted to outlaw all the various Puritan and Independent sects. This caused such an uproar for the preceding 30 years and persecution of the various sects continued throughout the 18th century.
Addicted to the Theater

- Charles II brought back the theater
- He had become addicted to theatergoing while in exile.
- Not only did he reopen the countries theaters he changed the rules: men no longer portrayed women because women could play those roles just as well.
- Nell Gwyn was one such famous leading female actress
- New plays emphasized the sexual relations of men and women in very unsentimental and unromantic ways
- Most of the witty comedies reflected life of the rich and leisured people of the time and their servants and hangers-on
- Some playwrights did not cater to the masses and wrote for the ordinary reader (those not belonging to the Anglican Church)
THE AGE OF SATIRE:
Attacks on Immorality and Bad Taste

- Alexander Pope and Jonathan Swift are the two most highly regarded literary figures of satire.
- *Satire* is a kind of writing that ridicules human weakness, vice, or folly in order to bring about social reform.
- They often try to persuade the reader to do or believe something by showing the opposite view as absurd or—even more forcefully—vicious and inhumane.
- During their lifetimes both Pope and Swift were criticized for frequently being out of harmony with the values of the age.
- Swift and Pope were appalled by the squalor and shoddiness—in art, manners, and morals—that underlay the polished surfaces of Augustan life.
Journalism – A New Profession

- Growing from the middle class
- Daniel Defoe (1660 – 1731); stood for values of the middle class: thrift, prudence, industry, and respectability; he showed no interest in polished manners and social poise.
- Journalists of the 18th century did not see themselves as contemporary political and social matters; instead they saw themselves as reformers of public manners and morals.
Novels

- The mid-eighteenth century people, including women, began writing long narratives called novels.
- A development of the middle class – often broad and comical adventures.
- Daniel Defoe’s *Robinson Crusoe* and other novels were among the first; Henry Fielding’s *Tom Jones* and Samuel Richardson’s *Pamela* and *Clarissa* are also among the first.
- Samuel Richardson was perhaps the first novelist to explore in great detail the emotional life of his characters, especially his heroines.
The Search for a simpler life

- By 1784 the world was changing in disturbing and profound ways: the Industrial Revolution was turning English cities and towns into filthy, smoky slums.
- The French were about to murder a king and set their society on an entirely different political course.
- People sensed that the age of elegance, taste, and reason was over; they were becoming disgusted with the excessive focus on the upper class and “good taste” and searched out simpler poetry, literature, and the possibilities of a more humble life.