

Great British Literature: Authors, Playwrights, and Poets

British Literature

With a thousand years of literary works dating from the Middle Ages to the present, this literature poses cultural and historical challenges for modern students. Although we share the same language, students will benefit from understanding the historical background, government structure, aristocratic system, class boundaries, and religious contentions, all of which requires some research.

Consider reading literature written by the following recognized authors:

Period	Novelists, Essayists, Playwrights
Pre-Renaissance (Recommend modern retellings)	<i>Beowulf</i> (Anon) <i>Sir Gawain and the Green Knight</i> (Anon) <i>The Canterbury Tales</i> by Geoffrey Chaucer
Renaissance	William Shakespeare, John Milton
Restoration & Enlightenment	Jonathan Swift, John Bunyan, Daniel Defoe, Thomas Paine, Mary Wollstonecraft, Samuel Johnson
Romantic Period	Jane Austen
Victorians	Mary Shelley, Charles Dickens, Emily Bronte, Charlotte Bronte, Elizabeth Gaskell, George Elliot, Thomas Hardy, Robert Louis Stevenson, Oscar Wilde
Modernists	Joseph Conrad, HG Wells, Aldous Huxley, James Joyce, George Orwell, CS Lewis, JRR Tolkien

As the highest form of literature, poetry requires more analysis to understand. Consider poems written by the following recognized poets:

Period	Poets
English Renaissance:	Edmund Spenser, Christopher Marlowe, Sir Walter Raleigh, William Shakespeare, John Donne, Ben Johnson, Richard Lovelace, John Milton
Restoration & Enlightenment:	Alexander Pope, Thomas Gray, Charlotte Smith
Romantic Period:	William Blake, William Wordsworth, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, Lord Byron, Percy Bysshe Shelley, John Keats, Alfred Lord Tennyson
Victorians:	Robert Browning, Elizabeth Barrett Browning
Modernists:	Stephen Spender, Rupert Brooke, William Butler Yeats, TS Eliot, WH Auden, Dylan Thomas