

Episode 1: How do we organise our history and the literature within it?

- Periodisation describes how we divide up history, in order to make sense of the past and to explain changes over time.
- Here are some units of times that historians use:
 - A year = 365 days
 - A decade = 10 years
 - A century = 100 years
 - A millennium = 1000 years
- Our historical timeline is founded in Christianity. We organise events around the point of the birth of Jesus Christ. An event can either occur BC (Before Christ) or AD (Anno Domini – This is Latin for 'In the year of our Lord').
- Literature describes a body of written work. A written work can be a poem, play or a novel.
- The literary canon is a list of the most important and influential pieces of literature.



Episode 2. What is culture and why is culture so influential on literature?

- Culture can be defined as all the ways of life including arts, beliefs and institutions that are passed down from generation to generation.
- As well as each person having their own unique culture, groups of people and places can also have a collective culture.
- It can be helpful to think about different events and holidays that are celebrated as an example of what culture looks like.



Episode Three: What was it like to live during the Renaissance Period?

- The term 'Renaissance', is derived from the French word for "rebirth".
- The Renaissance Period is said to be the 1400s to the 1600s.
- As an empire, England emerged as a strong economic and military force, sending explorers, merchants, and colonists as far as Africa and Asia.
- London was becoming the largest city in Europe.
- Due to overcrowding, the threat of Bubonic Plague increased.
- There was an increase in crime, specifically pickpocketing, which was made even easier with the overcrowded streets.



Episode 4. Why was the play form so popular during the Renaissance period?

- The play form was the most popular as it was inexpensive to watch and appealed to both monarchs and the most low-born. It also provided a welcome distraction from daily life.
- Audiences mainly watched morality plays and miracle plays.

Features of an Elizabethan Theatre:

- The theatre was open and plays had to be performed in daylight.
- A flag would be flown from the top of the theatre to show a play was going to be performed.
- People sat around the stage in galleries.
- The cheapest place was in front of the stage where ordinary people stood. They were known as 'groundlings'.
- There was very little scenery – a character would tell the audience where the scene was set.
- Women's parts were played by boys.
- Long speeches gave actors a chance to change their clothes.
- There was generally plenty of violence in the plays as this was popular with audiences.



Episode Five: Features of a Sonnet.

1. They are fourteen lines long.
2. The fourteen lines are divided into four groups.
3. The first three groups have four lines each, which makes them "quatrains," with the second and fourth lines of each group containing rhyming words.
4. The sonnet then concludes with two-lines and these two lines rhyme with each other. We call this a rhyming couplet.
5. There are typically ten syllables per line, which are phrased in iambic pentameter.



Episode 6/7 What were the Romantic writers passionate about?

- 'Romantic' describes writers who wanted to move away from being rational and logical and focus more on personal feelings and imagination.
- Romantic writers aimed to use their poetry to inform and inspire others, and to change society.
- Romantics focused on children as they believed that children were innocent and uncorrupted, enjoying a precious connection with nature.
- The Industrial Revolution saw new machinery that saved time and made some people very wealthy.
- The rich were getting richer and the poor were getting poorer.
- Orphans roamed the streets.
- The government didn't care about the poor. There was no help for people who were sick, poor, disabled or out of work.
- William Blake is one of the most important Romantic poets. He explored social issues in his poems and expressed his concerns about the monarchy and the church. His poem, 'London', draws attention to the suffering of chimney-sweeps, soldiers and prostitutes.



Episode 8. Can I explore how a writer's personal experience influences their writing?

- Mary Shelley wrote the novel, 'Frankenstein.'
- Victor Frankenstein is a Romantic character because he represents the Romantic ideals of imagination and innovation. Shelley also incorporates vivid imagery of nature.
- Shelley experienced a lot of tragedy in her life. Her mother had died when she was only one month old; her first two children died at an early age, and she also suffered the suicide of her half-sister.
- It is thought that the desire to bring back her loved ones inspired many of the themes in 'Frankenstein'.
- Mary Shelley had a dream which inspired her to write the novel..



Episode 9. What types of oppression existed in society?

- The Victorian Period was 1837 – 1901.
- Queen Victoria ruled for 64 years.
- Britain became the most powerful country in the world.
- The gap between the rich and the poor increased.
- The two sexes now inhabited what Victorians thought of as 'Separate Spheres', only coming together at breakfast and again at dinner.
- Victorian novels tend to be idealised portraits of difficult lives in which hard work, perseverance, love and luck win out in the end.
- Characters are often trying to make a better life for themselves and this is often achieved through kindness or through learning an important moral lesson.



Episode 10. How does a writer use their work as a mouthpiece for vulnerable members of society?

- During the Victorian Era, the economy and workforce relied heavily on children.
- Their energy, vulnerability, and inability to revolt against injustices made them easy targets for profit seeking, merciless bosses.
- Education was looked down upon as a waste of time.
- Children were sometimes the only source of money for most families.
- Workplaces were very unsafe.
- Workhouses were created and were intended to help the poor but the conditions inside were similar to prisons.

