

ENGLISH FOR PROFICIENCY IN SPEAKING AND WRITING



PART II

**МІНІСТЕРСТВО ОСВІТИ І НАУКИ УКРАЇНИ
ДЕРЖАВНИЙ ВИЩИЙ НАВЧАЛЬНИЙ ЗАКЛАД
"УЖГОРОДСЬКИЙ НАЦІОНАЛЬНИЙ
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КАФЕДРА АНГЛІЙСЬКОЇ ФІЛОЛОГІЇ**

**АНГЛІЙСЬКА ДЛЯ ВДОСКОНАЛЕННЯ
НАВИЧОК ПИСЬМА ТА МОВЛЕННЯ**

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Навчальний посібник «English for Proficiency in Speaking and Writing» має на меті розвиток та вдосконалення вмінь та навичок усної та писемної комунікації студентів. Побудований згідно з вимогами типової робочої програми. Розрахований на студентів III – IV курсів.

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ПЕРЕДМОВА

Одним із найважливіших стратегічних завдань модернізації сучасної освіти України є забезпечення якості підготовки фахівців відповідно до міжнародних вимог і стандартів. Приєднання України до європейського освітнього простору згідно з положеннями Болонської конвенції передбачає створення бази для майбутніх спеціалістів, які повинні ґрунтовно володіти фаховою іноземною мовою, що і спонукало видання цього посібника.

Навчальний посібник «English for proficiency in speaking and writing» базується на комплексному підході до вивчення англійської мови з урахуванням останніх досягнень та вимог методики викладання англійської мови у вищих навчальних закладах України та за кордоном. Зміст і структура посібника зумовлюються професійною орієнтацією студентів-філологів іноземної мови та відповідають програмі з англійської мови. Посібник рекомендований для проведення занять з аспекту розмовної практики зі студентами III- IV курсів факультетів іноземної філології.

Кожен тематичний розділ містить основний та додаткові тексти, чітко розроблену систему лексико-граматичних та комунікативних вправ для успішного розвитку та вдосконалення у студентів вмінь та навичок, що охоплюють всі види мовленнєвої діяльності. Тексти базуються на сучасних англомовних джерелах, відзначаються інформативністю, мають пізнавальне та культурологічне значення. Поетапне опрацювання кожного розділу під керівництвом і контролем досвідченого викладача забезпечує ефективний розвиток англомовної комунікативної діяльності студентів з урахуванням конкретної теми і сфери спілкування, творчого рольового виконання різноманітних завдань у конкретній мовленнєвій ситуації.

CONTENTS

<i>1. Literature</i>	<i>6</i>
<i>2. The history of English literature</i>	<i>21</i>
<i>2.1 Supplement 1</i>	<i>21</i>
<i>2.2 Supplement 2</i>	<i>34</i>
<i>2.3 Supplement 3</i>	<i>48</i>
<i>2.4 Supplement 4</i>	<i>56</i>

LITERATURE

Active Vocabulary

- ❖ art, art of literature, work of art, a person susceptible to art, method of art, to produce a work of art, the art of making friends
- ❖ to make no distinction (between), to make/draw a distinction, a writer of true distinction, to lack distinction
- ❖ inspired revelation/speaker/writer/composer/painter
- ❖ to reveal oneself to the people,
- ❖ to preach a sermon
- ❖ message, the message of the book, to get the message, to deliver the message, a ringing/penetrating message that goes home
- ❖ to write a book/an opera, to compose a symphony, to paint a picture
- ❖ a request for accurate information/revelation, a person possessed of accurate information, to contain information
- ❖ to reveal one's essential and spiritual relations
- ❖ to require a tremendous/heartbreaking effort
- ❖ spiritual/political/social/religious consciousness
- ❖ to create one's soul
- ❖ to place before somebody the picture of the world
- ❖ to come into the world,
- ❖ to make a new epoch
- ❖ to master with great effort and toil
- ❖ to get a hearing, to fascinate the hearers
- ❖ to be moved to the most furious and violent indignation
- ❖ to provide a garment of almost supernatural beauty
- ❖ to master words until one can turn them into music
- ❖ to act on one's senses/imagination
- ❖ to take an extraordinary delight in something

LITERATURE AND ART

from the essay "Literature and art" by G.B. Shaw

I make no distinction between literature and art. Literature is one of the forms of art and all art is one.

Art, and particularly the art of literature, does pretend in Great Britain especially, and more or less throughout Christendom, to be the method of inspired revelation. It is believed by the great mass of Christian people that when God wished to reveal Himself to the people He did not write an opera or compose a symphony or paint a picture. He wrote a book - in fact, a number of books - which are connected together in the volume called the Bible. From that point of view, the Bible is a work of art, of a very remarkable character, of very fine art. Now, how far can that claim be substantiated? - how far is the art of literature in particular the method of inspired revelation?

Suppose when you are leaving the City Temple one evening a man asks you, "*What is the shortest way to Aldersgate Street Station?*" and before you have had time to answer, another man says, "*What shall I do to be saved?*" Both men are asking "the way", and yet the answers must be very different. The first question is simply a request for accurate information; the second is really a request for revelation. You can get accurate information from almost anybody, but for revelation you have to go to the inspired speaker, writer, composer, painter.

When a man writes a drama or a book or preaches a sermon or employs any other method of art, what he really does is to take the events of life out of the accidental, irrelevant, chaotic way in which they happen, and to rearrange them in such a way as to reveal their essential and spiritual relations to one another. Leaving out all that is irrelevant, he has to connect the significant facts by chains of reasoning, and also to make, as it were, bridges

of feeling between them by a sort of ladder, get the whole thing in a connected form in to your head, and give you a spiritual, political, social, or religious consciousness. Literally, then the work of the artist is to create mind. Literature has not merely to save your soul; that would be a very simple thing if you have soul; writer's real difficulty is to create your soul; and he can only do that by placing before you the picture of the world and the significance of it, so that you become, not merely a person possessed of accurate information, but in the largest sense a human being, which means to a certain extent a poet, a person susceptible to art.

It requires a tremendous, and even heartbreaking, effort to produce a work of art, and no consideration of mere money-making will induce a man to make it. As a matter of fact, the inducement does not exist, because the man who produces a really new and original work of art always gets far more kicks than hapence. The odd thing is that when, for the first time, a new work of art comes into the world people do not look at it with indifference, but they are moved to the most furious and violent indignation. That has been the history of nearly all the great works of art that have made a new epoch. They have cost a tremendous effort.

And great artists, in order to get a hearing, have to fascinate their hearers; they have to provide a garment of almost supernatural beauty for the message they have to deliver. Therefore, when a man has a message to deliver in literature, with great effort and toil he masters words until he can turn them into music. He becomes a master of rhetoric that affects you like music. You cannot read it as you do the paragraphs in the newspaper that contain mere accurate information it acts on your senses and imagination in some strange way that, although you do not altogether understand the content of it, yet you feel that it is a great ringing message to you, a penetrating message that goes

home. It startles you, and you take an extraordinary delight in it.

GLOSSARY

- ❖ **Christendom** - (old use) all Christian people in general
- ❖ **message** –a spoken or written piece of information; the important or central idea
- ❖ **consciousness** - all ideas, opinions held by a person or a group of people
- ❖ **to induce** - to lead someone into an act often by persuading
- ❖ **to affect** - to act on one's senses, to produce an effect

EXERCISES

I. Understanding poetry.

Understanding poetry in a foreign language often seems hard at first, even discouraging, because the words and the forms used appear so different from those in everyday life. But poetry, which comes from the heart, was never meant to be a boring and difficult exercise. To enjoy it, you need to learn how to understand it and in doing so, I would suggest the following.

1. Listen to the words, without troubling too much about what they mean, in the same way as you would listen to a new piece of music. If it's not possible to listen, then read them aloud to yourself, just enjoying the sound and rhythm they make.

Sonnet 66

*Tired with all these, for restful death I cry,
As to behold desert a beggar born,*

*And needy nothing trimm'd in jollity,
 And purest faith unhappily forsworn,
 And gilded honour shamefully misplac'd,
 And maiden virtue rudely strumpeted,
 And right perfection wrongfully disgrac'd,
 And strength by limping sway disabled
 And art made tongue-tied by authority,
 And folly, doctor-like, controlling skill,
 And simple truth miscall'd simplicity,
 And captive good attending captain ill:
 Tir'd with all these, from these would I be gone,
 Save that, to die, I leave my love alone.*

W. Shakespeare

The Love Song of J Alfred Prufrock

*Let us go then, you and I,
 When the evening is spread out against the sky
 Like a patient etherised upon a table;
 Let us go, through certain half-deserted streets,
 The muttering retreats
 Of restless nights in one-night cheap hotels
 And sawdust restaurants with oyster-shells:
 Streets that follow like a tedious argument
 Of insidious intent
 To lead you to an overwhelming question...
 Oh, do not ask, "What is it?"
 Let us go and make our visit.*

T.S. Eliot

Now, consider the theme of the poem and unless the theme is given as the title, ask yourself what it is about. Read it again. By now you should have caught the mood - angry, sad, despairing,

comic or whatever.

2. Study the phrases the poet has used to express his feelings. Don't be afraid to criticise if you don't like them.

3. Try to find out a little about the poet, the age in which he lived, the problems he faced, so that you can understand better what moved him to write the poem.

4. The poetry will now begin to mean something to you, even if you don't understand all the words. Now is the time to check the vocabulary, but don't let your anxiety over the meaning of a particular word spoil your pleasure in a line.

5. Read it again. Repeat it. How does it make you feel - happy? bored? sad? excited?

II. Analysing poetry.

*If music be the food of love, play on,
Give me excess of it that, surfeiting,
The appetite may sicken and so die.
That strain again, it had a dying fall.
O, it came o'er my ear like the sweet sound
That breathes upon a bank of violets,
Stealing and giving odour.
Enough, no more,
'Tis not so sweet now as it was before.*

W. Shakespeare - Twelfth Night

1. What do you think Shakespeare meant by, 'If music be the food of love' (line 1)?

2. Why should the appetite 'sicken and so die' (line 3)? Which 'appetite*' is Shakespeare referring to?

3. Explain the following:

- a) surfeiting (line 2);
- b) strain (line 4);

- c) a dying fall (line 4);
- d) giving odour (line 7).

4. Pick out the words and phrases that are connected with

- a) sound;
- b) smell.

5. What difference in meaning is there in 'sweet' (line 5) and 'sweet' (line 8)?

6. The speaker says 'play on' (line 1) and 'Enough, no more' (line 7). What could be the reason for this change of mood?

7. Comment on any images of death in the poem.

III. Find Ukrainian translations of the pieces of poetry given in exercises I, II. Compare them with the original. Was the style of the authors preserved in translations? Do you like them? Don't be afraid to criticise if you don't.

IV. Learn the poems by heart.

COMPLEMENTARY TEXTS

Text 1

Now read the following extract from an essay on learning to listen to poetry, which includes some short extracts from poetry and drama in English literature.

English seems to be a language peculiarly adapted to poetry, or perhaps the making of poetry is a kind of national characteristic. Our islands have produced comparatively few great musicians and artists, but across the centuries stride a veritable army of poets, dramatists and ballad makers, chronicling our history, our hopes and fears on a rainbow bridge of words. Among these it is easy to see the giants - Chaucer, the father of

English Literature busily writing his Canterbury Tales, Spencer, Milton, Pope and the gentle figure of William Shakespeare rising above them all. Yet, jostling for our attention are a host of others, romantic, tragic, patriotic, comic, all sorts and conditions of poets and playwrights - if only we will take time to listen to them.

So, let us consider through their words the theme of Sleep. We sleep well or fitfully, we dream or not according to our imaginations or our digestions, we are insomniacs or somnambulists, but sleep is a part of us from our life's beginning to its end. In fact the eighteenth-century poet William Wordsworth in his Ode 'Intimations of Immortality' suggests that birth itself is a kind of sleep:

*Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting:
The Soul that rises with us, our life's Star,
Hath had elsewhere its setting
And cometh from afar:
Not in entire forgetfulness,
And not in utter nakedness,
But trailing clouds of glory do we come
From God, who is our home:
Heaven lies about us in our infancy!
Shades of the prison-house begin to close
Upon the growing Boy,
But he beholds the light, and whence it flows,
He sees it in his joy:
The Youth, who daily father from the east,
Must travel, still is Nature's priest,
And by the vision splendid Is on his way attended:
At length the Man perceives it die away
And fade into the light of common day.*

Sleep, as we know it, it begins in our cradle and from the earliest times gave rise to lullabies with which the mother rocked her baby to sleep. Here is one of the earliest nursery rhymes,

familiar to most English children:

*Hush-a-bye baby, on the tree-top,
When the wind blows the cradle will rock,
When the bough breaks, the cradle will fall,
Down will come baby, cradle and all.*

And here are the words of a song written by Thomas Dekker in the sixteenth century and still sung today:

*Golden slumbers kiss your eyes,
Smiles away you when you rise,
Sleep, pretty wantons, do not cry
And I will sing a lullaby.*

And the moving lines by Robert Herrick, seventeenth-century priest and poet, on the death of a little child:

*Here a pretty baby lies
Sung asleep with lullabies.
Pray be silent and not stir
The easy earth that covers her.*

In all Shakespeare perhaps no speech is better known than the one in 'Hamlet' beginning. 'To be or not to be...' in which Hamlet, near to despair, muses on death. Here is an extract from the speech in which the famous quotation 'To sleep - perchance to dream...' occurs.

*To be or not to be, - that is the question;
Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer
The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune,
Or to take arms against a sea of troubles,
And by opposing end them? - To die - to sleep
No more; and by a sleep to say we end
The heartache and the thousand natural shocks
That flesh is heir to, - 'tis a consummation
Devoutly to be wish'd. To die - to sleep;
To sleep! perchance to dream: ay, there's the rub;
For in that sleep of death what dreams may come*

*When we have shuffled off this mortal coil,
Must give us pause...*

'To sleep - perchance to dream' - this beautiful line expresses all the longing to escape from a troubled world, all the uncertainty of what will happen to us when we die.

EXERCISES

I. Read the first part of the essay on Poetry again and then answer the questions.

1. What is meant by the phrase, 'comparatively few great musicians and artists'?

2. Why do you think the writer uses the expression 'a rainbow bridge of words' to describe the poets throughout the centuries?

3. Who are the 'giants' referred to in the extract?

4. Why do other poets and playwrights have to 'jostle for our attention'?

5. Why is it easy to take a subject like sleep when learning to listen to poetry?

II. Read again the extract from 'Intimations of Immortality' by William Wordsworth and answer the following questions.

1. What do you think the poet means by, 'Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting'?

2. Why does the poet describe the new-born child as 'trailing clouds of glory'?

3. How does the poet describe the limitations that life gradually imposes on the growing boy?

4. Why is the youth described as still being 'Nature's priest'?

5. What do you understand by the last two lines?

III. Read again the nursery rhyme 'Hush-a-bye-Baby' and repeat it.

What does the rhythm of this rhyme suggest to you?

IV. Read again the verse by Thomas Dekker and repeat it.

Give a brief paraphrase of this verse.

V. Read again the lines by Robert Herrick and repeat them.

What picture does your mind receive from these few lines?

VI. Read the extract from Hamlet again and then answer the following questions.

1. What verb could be used in place of 'be' in the phrase 'To be or not to be'?
2. To what does the line 'The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune' refer?
3. Why do you think the word 'sea' is used in the phrase 'a sea of troubles'?
4. Which phrase do you think best expresses the sadness and disappointment that comes to man?
5. Explain the meaning of the phrase 'ay, there's the rub'.
6. Which line refers directly to the act of dying?
7. What do you understand by the phrase 'must give us pause'?

Text 2

This is what the American writer Henry James had to say about literary criticism: 'To criticise is to appreciate, to take

intellectual possession, to establish a fine relation with the criticised thing and make it one's own'.

Often in the Cambridge Proficiency examination, in Section B of Paper 2, you will be required to study a piece of prose and comment on it. There are generally questions on the content of the passage, the language used, the effectiveness of any figurative language and the overall tone or style of writing. So the best way to tackle the question is to read the passage through once just for general understanding of the subject matter. Then go back and read it again for language, noticing any particular vocabulary or figurative devices the writer might have used. Next, read through the questions that have been set on the passage and finally, read each paragraph of the passage separately - linking it to any question it refers to. Here is a representative passage with the questions worked for you.

Literary criticism can be no more than a reasoned account of the feeling produced upon the critic by the book he is criticising. Criticism can never be a science: it is, in the first place, much too personal and, in the second, it is concerned with values that science ignores. The touchstone is emotion, not reason. We judge a work of art by its effect on our sincere and vital emotion, and nothing else. All the critical twiddle-twaddle about style and form, all this pseudo-scientific classifying and analysing of books in an imitation-botanical fashion, is mere impertinence and mostly dull jargon.

A critic must be able to feel the impact of a work of art in all its complexity and its force. To do so, he must be a man of force and complexity himself, which few critics are. A man with a paltry, impudent nature will never write anything but paltry, impudent criticism. And a man who is emotionally educated is rare as a phoenix. The more scholastically educated a man is generally, the more he is an emotional boor.

More than this, even an artistically and emotionally educated

man must be a man of good faith. He must have the courage to admit what he feels, as well as the flexibility to know what he feels... A critic must be emotionally alive in every fibre, intellectually capable and skilful in essential logic, and then morally honest.

Then it seems to me a good critic should give his readers a few standards to go by. He can change the standards for every new critical attempt, so long as he keeps good faith. But it is just as well to say: This and this is the standard we judge by.

(D.H. Lawrence).

1. What are the qualities, according to this passage, of a 'good critic'?

A 'good critic' should be a man of force and complexity and be artistically and emotionally educated. He should feel the impact of the work he is reviewing and not judge it intellectually. He must be morally honest and have the courage of his convictions to say what he feels about the work. To sum up, he should be sensitive and emotionally aware, intellectually able, rigorous in applying logic and morally honest.

2. What does the author mean by 'The touchstone is emotion not reason' and why is the metaphor apt?

The author means the criterion for judging the work should be an emotional reaction, something felt, not a rational or logical thought process. The use of 'touchstone' instead of a word like 'criterion' in connection with emotion is more appropriate to the writer's feelings about criticism. 'Criterion' is a neutral unemotive word, more suitable to be connected with 'reason', while 'touchstone' suggests an intuitive basis for judgment - the word has rather magical, unreasoned connotations - touching stones for luck, the feeling of instinctive power contained in ancient stones; the touchstone used to be the standard for assessing the

purity of gold and silver - the unknown power of this stone deciding the fate of exotic metals. Therefore it expresses very vividly the author's conviction that emotion is the only sure guide to criticism as it is a powerful, instinctive force like the touchstone.

3. How far do you think this passage expresses the personal opinion of the author and how far it is an objective statement?

It appears for more a personal opinion as the author makes no attempt to back up his strongly expressed opinions with quotations or examples. In line 5 he dismisses the whole of the literary tradition of critical appreciation as 'twiddle-twaddle' or rubbish, without considering whether it could add any dimension to the understanding of a work when combined with personal, emotional opinion. In line 9 he uses 'must' when giving his opinion where an author expressing his point of view more objectively would probably use 'should'.

4. In the sentence, 'A critic must be able to feel the impact of a work of art in all its complexity and its force, why is the word feel emphasised?

Because the author feels very strongly the importance of feeling as opposed to 'reasoning in literary criticism, he wants to emphasise the personal, subjective approach - the feel for something.

5. What effect does the author achieve in the phrase 'emotionally alive in every fibre'?

By the use of the word 'fibre' in conjunction with 'emotionally alive' the author produces an-urgent, vivid picture of the necessity for the critic to use all of his emotional depth, down to the 'fibre", where the deepest levels of emotion are experienced

- *the skin and flesh stripped away exposing the 'fibre', the living emotional depths.*

6. What is the author's purpose in using the phrases 'pseudo-scientific classifying' and in an imitation-botanical fashion'?

The deliberately used 'scientific classifying' and 'botanical (scientific words) in connection with 'pseudo' and 'imitation', words which mean 'false?', show the author's opinion about the wrongness of this approach to criticism. It is not the true way, which is the emotional approach, but a 'false' (pseudo/imitation) method.

7. Comment on the author's statement that an emotionally educated man is as rare as a phoenix.

By comparing an emotionally educated man to a phoenix the author is making an ironic statement about how rare they both are. The phoenix in mythology only arose from its own funeral pyre every 500 years, therefore it was a very rare phenomenon like an emotionally educated man is nowadays. The use of the simile 'rare as a phoenix' enables the author to express this concept concisely.

From the above example of literary criticism you will see that the main response to the passage comes from an understanding of what the author is saying and an imaginative comprehension of his feelings as expressed through the language he uses. Analysing the literary devices (metaphor and simile) only adds to the personal interpretation and does not supersede it; it helps with our understanding of an author's style. **Do you agree with Lawrence's complete dismissal of literary analysis?**

THE HISTORY OF ENGLISH LITERATURE

Supplement I

Active Vocabulary

- ❖ to achieve through art self-recognition/self-awareness /self-definition;
- ❖ to confront one's own aspirations/despairs
- ❖ the nature of the tragedy, the essence of the fictive
- ❖ to be confined to (the English language, classics etc.) to aspire to address/to write for posterity
- ❖ to celebrate the deeds of the most notable instance of
- ❖ to result from the fusion of/to be blended with/to be derived from/ to be bound together by
- ❖ to be inspired by to be devoted to
- ❖ to cause a split in (linguistic unity, society, etc.) to bring about (a rapid change, new traditions, etc.) to date from (the time of..., the age of..., the year) to become blended into (one idiom, etc.) religious/didactic/rugged/warlike poetry/prose new/rich/pliable tongue/language the representative of (the period, the time, the age) to continue a tradition
- ❖ to be referred to as (the Barren Age, the Golden Age) literary output to be poor and uninspired to reach the fool bloom to get the established form 3. to be received with keen interest and great honours to develop a taste for art/letters the spirit of age/time
- ❖ to arise interest in literature/classics/studies
- ❖ the collection of tales
- ❖ vivid, fascinating style, to make popular by
- ❖ to develop and refine the taste for
- ❖ to reach unsurpassed heights of beauty and power
- ❖ to be remarkable for (learning, creative genius)

- ❖ to reflect the dramatic change/the age
- ❖ to be tinged with sadness/melancholy/joy
- ❖ the loss/the collapse of accepted standards/ideals

GLIMPSES OF ENGLISH LITERATURE

Part I

'Happy the people', wrote Thomas Carlyle, adapting a commonplace, 'whose annals are blank in history-books'. It may be so, but one could not envy a people whose literary annals were vacant. For a nation achieves through art self-recognition, self-awareness, self- definition. In literature a race-which means herein effect a linguistic community-confronts its own aspirations and despairs.

Here we shall find its conversation with itself, its quarrel with others, its inner thoughts and its outer experience, its private meditations and its public utterances. But the Englishness of English literature is not just the product of some broad political, social, or cultural influences: it is an artistic fact, a phenomenon to be explored with the help of rhetoric and criticism, just like the nature of tragedy or the essence of the fictive.

Text 1

OLD AND MIDDLE ENGLISH LITERATURE

These periods in English literature extend from 700 to about 1500, a stretch of roughly eight hundred years. The quantities of English verse and prose actually produced during these centuries were, relatively speaking, small. The population of England in 1377, the year of the poll tax, was probably something less than three million. The literary efforts of this relatively small

population were by no means confined to the English language. Authors who aspired to address the larger learned world regularly wrote in Latin; and Chaucer was perhaps the first Englishman deliberately to write for posterity in his native tongue. Another explanation of small quantities of English verse and prose produced during these centuries is that a literary work in a medieval vernacular might never get written down at all, or else, if it did, the copies may have been lost.

Most of the poetry written in Old English was rugged and warlike, and celebrated the deeds of various heroes. Outstanding elements in it were a keen and smarting sense of fate, a deep love for the sea, even in its terrific and gloomy aspects, and a dismal melancholy. The most notable instance of it is *Beowulf*, a poem of about 3,200 lines resulting from the fusion of a number of sagas which the Saxons brought along from their homeland, and in which the supernatural is strangely blended with the real. The date of composition is uncertain, but it was probably not until about A.D. 750 that the poem was written down.

All known Old English poems observe, though with some variations, the principles of alliterative verse. Its principles, derived from a common Germanic tradition of oral poetry, are syllable count, recurrent patterns of stress, and rhyme. The Anglo-Saxon verse line consists of two parts bound together by alliteration. Variation in the number of syllables in each half-line is a matter of indifference, but each half will normally have two stressed or heavy syllables.

The earliest monuments of Old English prose date from the time of King Alfred of Wessex (871-99). Among them are *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* and the group of translations made or inspired by the king. However, the best of Anglo-Saxon prose was produced a century later in the age of the Monastic Revival of liturgy and learning, by the monks Wulfstan and Aelfric. Their writings were devoted to the exposition of Christian faith and

learning for English congregations and readers.

The invasion of the Normans caused a split in the linguistic unity of England and brought about a rapid change in the idiom of the country. It took years before the French and Saxon elements became blended into one idiom, but eventually a new tongue, rich and pliable, emerged from the long process of fusion. Scholars have given to this tongue the name of Middle English. It was the medium of English literature from the 12th to the 15th centuries. During the Early Middle English period, the old device of alliteration, which fitted so well the warlike songs of the Anglo-Saxons, began to be dropped for the softer effects of rhyme.

The literary production of this period consists mainly of romances and religious or didactic poetry and prose. The romances continued a tradition existing in Normandy, which the conquerors had brought over to England; religious and didactic poetry was generally produced by clerical people, copied by patient scribes and often preserved in abbeys and monasteries.

The subject of the poetic tales called romances was often the adventures of valiant knights against robbers, giants, or Saracens. Love and Honour were strongly idealized and became a point of the creed of feudal chivalry. These tales were circulated chiefly by minstrels who journeyed from place to place to entertain people with their songs. The greatest representative of the period and the first modern poet is Geoffrey Chaucer. His best known work, *The Canterbury Tales*, designed about 1387, is the most beautiful piece in Middle English. It was first printed by Caxton in 1475. To Chaucer's contemporaries belong William Langland, John Gower, and John Wycliffe.

The century which followed the death of Chaucer is sometimes referred to as the 'Barren Age of English Literature'. Wars and defeats abroad, rebellions and civil wars at home, prevented the growth of as strong a literature as the coming of the Renaissance to Italy and France might otherwise have provided,

and the seeds sown by Chaucer merely produced imitators.

While the literary output of learned poets was rather poor and uninspired, popular songs or ballads reached their full bloom. They got the established form, distinct from the metrical romance, and dealt with feats of outlaws, tribal feuds, legendary or historical characters. One of these legendary heroes was Robin Hood who lived in Sherwood Forest near Nottingham.

Text 2

TUDOR LITERATURE 1485-1603

The year 1453 is a turning point in the history of world literature. In that year Constantinople fell into the hands of the Turks and many Greek scholars, who were living there and were the heirs of the traditions of Greece, fled to Italy carrying priceless manuscripts and works of art.

They were received with keen interest and great honours for, just at that time, Italy was enjoying a comparative prosperity and was developing a taste for art and letters.

The spirit of the Italian Renaissance soon spread from Italy into other countries, particularly into Germany and Holland, and soon conquered the whole of Continental Europe. The new ideas had begun to be felt in England even during the dark days of the civil wars: King Henry VI had founded colleges at Eton and Cambridge, while his uncle Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester, had collected books and had tried to foster scholarship. But only when the civil wars were over and peace was established under Henry VII did the influence of the Italian humanists really begin to affect the English universities and a fresh interest arose in the Greek and Latin classics.

The beginning of the period under review is marked by the printing a long prose romance, *Le Morte D'Arthur*, or 'The Death

of Arthur', written by Thomas Malory. It was the collection of the tales that had flourished around King Arthur and his knights. They are told in a fascinating and vivid style through which the reader can recapture all the glamour of the lost world of chivalry.

A century later, almost at the end of the period, Prince Arthur becomes the hero of another romance, but now a hybrid of Italian Renaissance epic and English verse allegory written by Edmund Spenser, Spenser's Arthur, whose own story has barely begun, is making his way to the court of the Faerie princess Gloriana. He was to marry her, and so unite the Britons with the race of Faerie, the spirit people of the inner world, who were hidden from the eye, but had always existed in parallel to the Britons. The difference between English medieval and Renaissance literature can be noted here. Malory's Arthur is an old king whose death is an enigma, and whose return, or resurrection, is uncertain. Spenser's Arthur is a young man seeking nuptial, spiritual, and national joy with a princess who in real life rules the new Britain of the Tudors.

By the time the last of the Tudors, Elizabeth, became Queen of England, the Renaissance had already strongly affected English letters. The translations from Greek, Latin and Italian, made popular by the art of printing, had developed and refined the general taste for literature; the language had been enriched and polished by the work of brilliant humanists; the interest in learning had reached unprecedented intensity.

The sudden outburst of splendid literature in the age of Elizabeth was the result of these influences and the general enthusiasm and optimism caused by the political achievements of the nation and by the brilliant victories abroad. The two main literary characteristics of Elizabethan age were: the development of drama, which reached unsurpassed heights of beauty and power; the indebtedness of English authors to Italian and classic models.

Yet some works of the period were more remarkable for learning and scholarship than for creative genius. Moreover, some of the best books were written in Latin and now have a place in the history of thought rather than in the history of English literature.

Note 1.

A selection of writers of the period: *Thomas More (1477-1535)*, *Edmund Spenser (1552-1599)*, *Sir Philip Sidney (1554-1586)*, *John Lyly (1554-1606)*, *Christopher Marlowe (1564-1593)*, *William Shakespeare (1564-1616)*.

Text 3

THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY 1603-1674

Literary history does not always lend itself to tidy divisions. The accession of King James I in 1603 inaugurated 'the Jacobean age', but such period divisions reflect no dramatic change of mood. Only when Charles I ascended the throne in 1625, and his reign became a long fight between himself and the Puritans which ended with his death on the scaffold, the spiritual unity of Elizabethan literature was broken up. The writers of the age became divided in their inspirations, as Puritans and Cavaliers were divided on the battlefield.

Literature became critical and intellectual rather than emotional, and was sometimes tinged with peculiar sadness, deriving from the collapse or challenge of accepted standards, the loss of old and cherished ideals, and from the sterner standards of life set by the Puritans.

The writers of the age can be roughly divided into the following classes: (a) the Puritans, represented mainly by Milton who felt almost called to a poetic mission; (b) the Mystics, who took refuge in thoughts of God and the soul, and ignored the

events around them; and (c) the Royalists or Cavalier poets, who derived their inspirations from universal themes of love and nature.

Prose is represented by a group of eccentrics, who chose to deal peacefully with quaint subjects far removed from the strife of the hour, and by the great preachers and orators in the tradition of Donne and Milton.

Note 2.

A selection of writers of the period: *John Donne (1572-1631)*, *Thomas Lodge (1558-1625)*, *Sir Francis Bacon (1561-1626)*, *John Milton (1608-1674)*, *Andrew Marvell (1621-1678)*.

GLOSSARY

- ❖ **annals** - a history or record of events, discoveries, etc., produced every year
 - ❖ **rhetoric** - the act of speaking or writing so as to persuade people effectively
 - ❖ **criticism** - the act of forming judgments about the good or bad qualities of anything, esp. artistic work
 - ❖ **tragedy** - a serious play that ends sadly
 - ❖ **fictive** - pertaining to the creation of fiction
- ***
- ❖ **verse** - written language in the form of poetry
 - ❖ **poll tax** - a capitation tax, the payment of which is sometimes prerequisite to exercise the right of suffrage
 - ❖ **vernacular** - expressed or written in the native language of a place, as literary works
 - ❖ **saga** - a long story about the brave and exciting actions of a distant time in history
 - ❖ **alliteration** - the appearance of the same sound or sounds at the beginning of two or more words that are next to or close to each other as in "Round the rocks runs the river"

- ❖ **liturgy** - a form of worship in the Christian church, using prayers, songs
 - ❖ **romance** - a medieval narrative originally one in verse and some Romance dialects, treating of heroic personages or events
 - ❖ **didactic** - meant to teach, esp. to teach a moral lesson
 - ❖ **valiant** - very brave, esp. in war
 - ❖ **Saracen**-a) a member of any of the Normandic tribes on the Syrian borders; b) later Arab; c) a Muslim, esp. one mentioned in connection with any of the Crusades
 - ❖ **creed** - a system of esp. religious beliefs or principles
 - ❖ **chivalry** - the beliefs or practices of noble soldiers as a group
 - ❖ **minstrel** - a musician who travelled about the country singing songs and poems
 - ❖ **feat** - a clever action, showing strength, skill, or courage
 - ❖ **feud** - a state of strong dislike and/ or violence which continues over a long time as a result of quarrel
- ***
- ❖ **glamour**-a special quality of charm and beauty
 - ❖ **epic** - a long poem about the deeds of gods and great men
 - ❖ **allegory** -a story, poem, painting in which the characters and actions represent good and bad qualities
 - ❖ **resurrection** - the rising of Christ from his grave
 - ❖ **nuptial** - of or concerning marriage or the marriage ceremony
- ***
- ❖ **scaffold** - a raised stage for the killing of criminals
 - ❖ **Puritan** -one of a class of Protestants that arose in the 16th century within the Church of England, demanding reforms in doctrine and worship and greater strictness in religious discipline. During part of the 17 century the Puritans became a powerful political party.
 - ❖ **Cavalier** - an adherent of Charles 1 of England in his contest with Parliament Cavalier poets -a group of English poets

mainly at the court of Charles I who produced a body of graceful lyric poetry

- ❖ **Mystic** - a person who claims to attain, or believe in the possibility of attaining, insight into mysteries, transcending ordinary human knowledge as by immediate intuition in a state of spiritual ecstasy
- ❖ **eccentric** - a person who has an unusual peculiar or odd personality, set of beliefs, or behaviour pattern

COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

1. What effect has the art of literature on the human race?
2. Why were the quantities of verse and prose in Old and Middle English relatively small?
3. What are the characteristic features of Old English poetry?
4. What Englishman was the first deliberately to write for posterity in his native tongue?
5. When was the best of Anglo-Saxon prose produced?
6. During what period was Middle English the medium of English literature?
7. What does the literary production of Middle English period consist of?
8. What was the subject of Middle English romance?
9. What writer is considered to be the greatest representative of Middle English period in literature?
10. What factors prevented the growth of as strong Renaissance literature in Britain as literature in Italy and France?
11. What are the Middle English ballads about?
12. Why is the year 1455 considered a turning point in the history of world literature?
13. What literary work marked the beginning of the period of Tudor literature?
14. In what way does English medieval literature differ from

English Renaissance literature?

15. What are the main characteristics of Elizabethan age?
16. Why was the spiritual unity of Elizabethan age broken up in the 17th century?
17. Into what classes can the writers of the 17th century be divided?

EXERCISES

1. Use a good general dictionary and suggest the adjectives that can be applied to "books", literary characters" and "style". Make up sentences with them.
2. Translate the preface to the text "Glimpses of English Literature" into Ukrainian. Suggest the facts to prove or refuse the ideas expressed there.
3. To what period in the development of English literature do these writers belong?

<i>King Alfred of Wessex</i>	<i>Geoffrey Chaucer</i>
<i>Thomas Malory</i>	<i>Christopher Marlowe</i>
<i>John Milton</i>	<i>Edmund Spenser</i>
<i>William Shakespeare</i>	<i>John Wycliffe</i>
4. Match the words on the left with their definitions on the right.
5. Which of the writers in Notes I, 2 have you heard of? Can you name any of their works?
6. Put the verbs in brackets in the appropriate tense forms.

SHAKESPEARE AND THE ELIZABETHAN THEATRE

William Shakespeare (to be) a boy of twelve when in 1576 the first purpose-built theatre in England (to open) 'The Theatre' (to stand) just north of the boundary of the City of London and so (to be) outside its jurisdiction. It (to build) by an actor, James

Burbage, whose son Richard (to become) the leading actor in Shakespeare's plays. James Burbage (to give up) the trade of joiner and (to be) a member of a strolling band of players who (to enjoy) the patronage of the earl of Leicester. Burbage (to be) thus associated with another notable event of major importance in the history of English drama; in 1574 Leicester's men (to become) the first company of actors to be granted a royal patent, entitling them to act their plays throughout the country. The queen herself (to become) the patron of a group of actors in 1583. 'The Theatre' (to be) the first of a long line of metropolitan playhouses that (to be) the focus of the professional theatre in its heyday: the Curtain, the Red Bull, the Fortune north of the city, and, south of the Thames, the Rose, the Swan, the Globe, the Hope. The development of the professional drama in Elizabethan times (to be impossible) without the protection and encouragement of the queen and her Privy Council.

She (to need) companies of trained actors to supply the requirements of court entertainment. But all during her reign and for many years afterwards the 'common players' (to have) to advance their profession in the teeth of the most determined opposition from city authorities throughout the realm and especially in London who (to have) the strongest objections to this burgeoning activity on grounds of public order, morality, and religion. This new public professional theatre (to be) almost crippled by the controls it (to force) to operate under. The queen, the Church, and the City (to be) all watchful! for the least sign of plays and players straying beyond permitted limits, and censorship (to be) extremely tight. But the theatre (to flourish) and the demand for new plays (to be) continuous.

- 7. Write out from the text above all non-finite forms and define their syntactic functions.**

THE HISTORY OF ENGLISH LITERATURE*Supplement 2**Active Vocabulary*

- ❖ to be matched by changes in
- ❖ to take on, to be modulated into
- ❖ the novel proper, the development of novel writing
- ❖ to be labeled
- ❖ verse welcome, to praise somebody in verse
- ❖ a useful career move
- ❖ to come forward with
- ❖ to amass materials
- ❖ gradual publication
- ❖ a complete break
- ❖ under the influence of
- ❖ to be prevalent
- ❖ to write in clear/ concise manner
- ❖ to drop the extravagance of
- ❖ to be perfected by
- ❖ to become a standard verse
- ❖ in sharp contrast with
- ❖ to be credited
- ❖ the prevailing form of expression
- ❖ to depict characters against a background, the development of character, the technique of character drawing
- ❖ to be intended to amuse/instruct
- ❖ to develop a taste for
- ❖ to create a concept of what poetry is
- ❖ the dominance of (Renaissance tradition, classics, etc.)
- ❖ to be dominated by
- ❖ the rediscovery of (local cultures, etc.)

- ❖ to draw on
- ❖ the fragmentation of consciousness away from the classical inheritance to have little influence to turn to
- ❖ a reaction against rationalism to be derived from to break out restrictive patterns of to rebel against
- ❖ to become abundant and varied to be marked by
- ❖ absolute compliance with to reject the traits of to be consistent with
- ❖ to reflect the tendencies/ aspirations of the period

GLIMPSES OF ENGLISH LITERATURE

Part II

Text 1

RESTORATION AND EIGHTEENTH CENTURY 1660-1780

The eighteenth century in English literary history generally opens with the Restoration period as a kind of preface, which is held to prolong itself until the new century dawns. There are reasons for this. The political U-turn of the Restoration itself was matched by changes in literature: the drama took on a new lease of life, prose fiction modulated into the novel proper, and poets turned more and more to the heroic couplet and to effects of clarity, balance (sometimes parallelism and antithesis), and pointed but unflamboyant wit. The period is sometimes labeled the Age of Reason or the Augustan Age (several writers drew the parallel between their own age and that of Augustus Caesar, but they differed widely in the estimate of that age). On the whole labels only obscure the variety of what was written in these four generations of accelerating change.

Poets rushed to work at the news - hinted, leaked, denied, restated - of Charles II's imminent return. A memorable verse welcome would be a useful career move, and the imagery appropriate to royalty - the sun, lions, eagles; England as a traditionally white-clad female penitent for unchastity - exerted its own attraction. Edmund Waller, who had twice praised Cromwell in verse, compensated with an address to Charles on his happy return. John Dryden (1631-1700), who had commemorated Cromwell's death in heroic stanzas (1659), came forward with *Astraea Redux*, a poem of grandiloquent conceits in which, as the king's ship draws near, the land moves from its place to receive him.

The history of the Interregnum was soon being written and interpreted. Samuel Pepys (1633-1703) foresightedly began his diary on New Year's Day 1660. John Evelyn was already keeping his; John Aubrey started about 1667 to amass materials for a work he never finished, *Brief Lives*, whose gradual publication began a century later.

But the Restoration in literature was characterized not only by a rejection of all that had been peculiar to the Puritan period, but also by a complete break, under the influence of the new French models, even from the previous standards of the times of Elizabeth and James I. While imagination and extravagance had been prevalent during the reigns of those two monarchs, reason and balance became the features of the new age.

In point of style the writers of the Restoration learned from the French how to write in a clear, concise manner and dropped the extravagance of thought and language that had characterized Elizabethan literature.

A peculiar feature of the poetry of the Restoration was the almost general adoption of the heroic couplet of two rhyming iambic pentameters, later perfected by Pope to become the standard verse form of the 18th Century. This was regarded by

Dryden and others as the true form of English heroic verse and most suitable for heroic drama.

Restoration comedy was marked by the cynical spirit of the age and was therefore, in sharp contrast with the romantic comedy of the Elizabethans. It was strongly affected by the continental tradition (Moliere and Calderon) and largely reflected the dissoluteness of Court life.

Wit, polish and intellectual control were the essential features of the new comedy, which was only intended to amuse, never to instruct.

As far as plot is concerned, it can be said that, under the influence of French models, some of the writers of comedies of this period developed a taste for amorous intrigues which often led them to gross sensuality and immorality.

It is a convention almost universally accepted to indicate the particular disposition of each character by a revealing name (Sir Flopping Flutter for a foppish type, Colonel Bully for an overbearing officer, Squire Sullen for an unsociable, gloomy-tempered man, etc.). The sense {fun was largely based in the study of these 'types' of 'Johnsonian humorous'. This sort of comedy, where emphasis is laid upon the social follies of the characters rather than on the humour of the plot and situations, is generally called 'comedy of manners'.

With the advent of Queen Anne in 1702, a period of classicism began. The word classicism, however, as applied to this age, refers to the general tendency of literature to look at life with cold detachment, critically rather than imaginatively or emotionally, and to use precise and elegant patterns of expression.

One of the greatest achievements with which the 18th Century must be credited is the development of novel-writing. As the drama had been the natural and prevailing form of expression in the days of Elizabeth, the novel became the most popular and obvious vehicle of literature in this age of prose and realism.

The main feature of a novel is, indeed, that of being a prose narrative, or tale, of a certain length, describing probable situations and depicting 'possible' characters against a background broadly true to life.

The first germs of the novel in English can be found in the long romances of the Middle Ages. Chaucer's *Troilus and Criseyde* is often assumed to be the earliest type of novel describing the development of a character. But only in Elizabethan times can we find a number of prose tales that can be looked upon as very close approaches to a novel.

Further stages towards the full development of the modern novel were the allegorical story of adventure (*Gulliver's Travels*) and the character sketches in the manner of Addison and Steele, which contributed to the development of the technique of character-drawing.

The reign of classicism is assumed to have lasted practically till the publication of the *Lyrical Ballads* by William Wordsworth and Samuel Taylor Coleridge in 1798. The two outstanding representatives of the movement in literature were Pope for the first half of the century, and Samuel Johnson for the second half.

In the age of Johnson, however, a number of poets were already beginning to write in a mood which betrayed the development of a new sensibility and foreboded the romantic movement.

Note I.

A selection of writers of the period: *John Bunyan (1628-1688)*, *Samuel Butler (1612-1680)*, *John Dryden (1631-1700)*, *William Congreve (1670-1729)*, *Sir John Vanbrugh (1664-1726)*, *Alexander Pope (1688-1744)*, *Jonathan Swift (1667-1745)*, *Richard Steele (1672-1729)*, *Joseph Addison (1672-1719)*, *Samuel Johnson (1709- 1784)*, *Daniel Defoe (1660-1731)*, *Samuel Richardson (1689-1761)*, *Laurence Sterne (1713-1768)*, *Henry Fielding (1707-1754)*, *Tobias Smollett (1721-1771)*, *Oliver*

Text 2**THE ROMANTIC PERIOD
1780-1830**

For the common reader the poetry of the English Romantic poets - Blake, Wordsworth, Coleridge, Byron, Shelley, and Keats - has created a concept of what poetry is, just as for the common listener the symphonies of Beethoven, their contemporary, has supplied an ideal of music. Why should that be?

The Romantic period in Europe saw the end of the dominance of the Renaissance tradition. It saw the fragmentation of consciousness away from the cultural authority of classical Rome. One result was the rediscovery of local cultures, and a flowering of vernacular literatures. Romantic literature is strong in many of the vernaculars of Europe, and indeed is most clearly seen in the literatures which it more or less creates, notably German and Russian.

In this sense it draws on one of the strands of meaning in the complex word 'romantic' which derives from Old French romance, meaning a vernacular language descended from Latin. In Britain, where there had been a strong vernacular literature for several centuries, this fragmentation of consciousness was a less sudden affair. There were many pointers to it in the eighteenth century: Thomas Cray, for instance, had explored those literatures, other than the classical, which had influenced English, notably Celtic and Norse. There was no need to look to other languages. One could look at those sections of society where the classical inheritance had had little influence, in ballads, folk-songs, and the literature of the common people. Or one could look back in time, to the non-classical medieval world, as in the vogue

for the 'Gothic'. Or one could turn to the inspired utterance of Europe's other tradition, the biblical.

Although the adjective 'romantic' derives ultimately from the word that gives us the expression 'the Romance languages' it came to mean more than a language; it meant also the quality and preoccupations of literature written in those languages, especially 'romances' and stories. By the seventeenth century in English the word 'romantic' had come to mean anything from imaginative or fictitious, to fabulous or downright extravagant. It was often used with overtones of disapproval; as the eighteenth century progressed, however, it was increasingly used with approval, especially in descriptions of pleasing qualities in landscape. The use of the term 'romantic' for the poetry of the period from 1780 to 1830 has this bunch of meanings behind it.

It is hard to see the significance of the 'romantic' without looking at what it was reacting against. The Romantic period saw changes in philosophy, politics, and religion, as well as in the arts of literature, painting, and music, changes which the English Romantic poets both articulated and symbolized. In philosophy the Romantic period saw a reaction against the rationalism of the eighteenth century. It was a reaction against a view of the physical world increasingly dominated by science, and of the mental world by the theories of Locke. The attack on the adequacy of reason in literature has started with the Augustan satirists; it was the Romantics who tried to capture and explore what was missing. The Romantic poets rebelled against the emphasis on the material and on 'common sense' which had dominated the preceding period. For most of them there was a more real order, only to be glimpsed but which commanded their faithful allegiance. It is Wordsworth's something far more deeply interfused...'. The more visionary Romantic poets are concerned with something more than what is derived from everyday observation, or the sanction of the majority view.

The Romantic period in literature coincided with the French Revolution which was to some extent a political enactment of its ideas. It too, in its idealistic early stages, involved breaking out of the restrictive patterns of the past. The two generations of English Romantic poets were each affected by it. The older generation, Blake, Wordsworth, and Coleridge, were young men in 1789 and were fired with revolutionary ideas. In *The Prelude* (1830) Wordsworth eloquently recalled that time:

*France standing on the top of golden hours,
And human nature seeming born again.*
(VI. 340-1)

What followed, the Terror and the rise of Napoleon, all too easily caused disillusionment. Although some of these poets retreated into reaction in later life they were lucky to have lived through a period which offered something to match the idealism of youth. The younger generation of poets, Byron, Shelley, and Keats, were less fortunate. They grew up in a society dominated by the repression of a series of Tory government apprehensive that every request for freedom might open the floodgates of revolution.

In prose the Romantic Revival is connected with the vogue for Scott's historical novels, with the development of criticism and essay-writing, and with the growth of periodical literature.

Note 2.

A selection of writers of the period: *William Wordsworth* (1770-1850), *Samuel Taylor Coleridge* (1772-1834), *Robert Southey* (1774-1843), *George Gordon, Lord Byron* (1788-1824), *Percy Byssie Shelley* (1792-1822), *John Keats* (1795-1821), *Walter Scott* (1771-1832), *Jane Austen* (1775-1817), *William Blake* (1757-1827), *Robert Burns* (1759-1796), *Ann Radcliffe* (1764-1823).

Text 3**HIGH VICTORIAN LITERATURE
1830-1880**

During the reign of Queen Victoria the literary production of England became extremely abundant and varied.

The chief features of the period were, perhaps, the prevalence of prose over poetry and the development of the novel which became the most popular form of literature. Most of the production of the time, both in prose and in verse, was characterized by a definite social purpose and was intended to reform, instruct, and inspire. It was generally marked by absolute compliance with tradition and orthodoxy, and rejected some of the traits of Romanticism - such as extravagance and unruliness - which were no longer consistent with the new ideals of self control, order and respectability. This led to a few minor reversions to classicism, but, as a whole, literature continued to be romantic in its imaginative and emotional intensity and, above all, in its interest in humble people and commonplace things. Though largely reflecting the tendencies and aspirations of the period, it was often critical of it, and advocated more social reforms and greater spiritual progress as opposed to material welfare. It exposed and denounced the shortcomings and hypocrisies of contemporary society, and, by the end of the century, was in open revolt against the moral and artistic standards of the age. This revolt is generally described as Anti-Victorian Reaction and marked the end of Victorianism as a social and literary force.

Victorian poetry was generally purposeful in subject and serious in tone, and, unlike fiction, was seldom relieved by humour. Its main themes were the torments of doubt in perplexed souls, the social problems of the day, the pleasures of wedded love, the ecstasies of religious faith. The prevailing note was,

however, one of sadness and uncertainty and the spirit of the age as a whole was best interpreted in Tennyson's wistful, polished, and melodious lines.

Note 3.

A selection of writers of the period: *Matthew Arnold (1822-1888)*, *Lewis Carroll (1832-1898)*, *Alfred Lord Tennyson (1809-1892)*, *Robert Browning (1812-1889)*, *Charlotte Bronte (1816-1855)*, *Anne Bronte (1820-1749)*, *Charles Dickens (1812- 1870)*, *Anthony Trollope (1815-1882)*, *William Makepeace Thackeray (1811-1863)*, *George Eliot (1819-1880)*, *Thomas Carlyle (1795-1881)*, *John Ruskin (1891-1900)*.

GLOSSARY

- ❖ **couplet** - a pair of successive lines of verse esp. that rhyme and are of the same length
- ❖ **penitent** - feeling or showing sorrow for having done wrong, with an intention not to do so again
- ❖ **unchastity** - (esp. of young women) the state of being sexually impure
- ❖ **imminent** - which is going to happen very soon
- ❖ **grandiloquent** - speaking or expressed in a lofty or pompous style, bombastic
- ❖ **conceit** - too high an opinion of one's own abilities, value
- ❖ **Interregnum** - an interval of time between the close of a sovereign's reign and the accession of his normal or legitimate successor
- ❖ **iambic pentameter** - unrhymed verse of five iambic feet, heroic verse
- ❖ **comedy** - funny play in which the story and characters are amusing and which ends happily
- ❖ **classicism** - the principles of classic literature and art (contrasted with romanticism)

- ❖ **dissoluteness** - leading a bad or immoral life
- ❖ **narrative** - a story of events, experiences or the like whether true or fictitious

- ❖ **romantic** - pertaining to or characteristic of a style of literature and art which subordinates form to content, encourages freedom of treatment, emphasizes imagination, emotion and often celebrated nature, the common man and freedom of spirit
- ❖ **allegiance** - loyalty, faith, and dutiful support to a leader, country, idea, etc.
- ❖ **sanction** - permission, approval

- ❖ **orthodoxy** - ideas generally or officially accepted

COMPREHENSION EXERCISES

Guess what period in English literature can be characterised by the following sets of features.

1.

- a) a) the prevalence of poetry over prose in consequence of the imaginative character of the age;
- b) a deliberate use of simple words and of a fresh and homely set of poetic expressions and associations;
- c) a shifting of the sense of awe and mystery from the grotesque and extravagant improbabilities of the pre-romantic age to the simplicities of everyday life: the song of a nightingale, the blowing of the west wind, a cottage girl, etc.;
- d) an emphasis on moral and political freedom;
- e) interest in the life of the Poor and the Humble;
- f) subjective lyricism;
- g) interest in places and ages remote from the classical tradition.

2.

- a) the development of a clear and logical prose style needed for the expression of a multitude of practical interests arising from the new social and political conditions;
- b) the prevalence of prose over verse with the consequent discovery or rediscovery of new literary forms (the essay, the novel, etc.);
- c) the search for intellectual rather than emotional satisfaction;
- d) the tendency to find the subject matter of literature in common social experience and to emphasize its social usefulness;
- e) the prevalence of satire, often applied to politics.

3.

- a) the prevalence of prose over poetry;
- b) the development of the novel which became the most popular form of literature;
- c) an emphasis on literature intended to reform, instruct and inspire;
- d) interest in humble people and commonplace things;
- e) emphasis on social reforms and spiritual progress as opposed to material welfare;
- f) denunciation of the shortcomings and hypocrisies of contemporary society.

EXERCISES**I. Translate into Ukrainian the following passage:****THE GOTHIC TALE**

The emotional sense of wonder and the intellectual curiosity of the age were reflected in the 'Gothic novel'. The name 'Gothic' was applied to this type of fiction because it had a counterpart in

the revival of Gothic architecture and because it discovered the aesthetic value of the grotesque and barbarous in opposition to classical proportion and refinement.

These tales were particularly designed to thrill the reader by describing horrible murders, fiendish conspiracies, and appalling tortures, and were therefore also called 'black novels'. They were generally set in a distant time or place, thus providing a manner of escape from the real and the commonplace for the extremely imaginative public of the time.

The importance of the novels written in this peculiar style lies not so much in their artistic qualities, which are indeed rather scanty, but in the remarkable influence they had throughout the Romantic age on such writers as Scott, Shelley, Poe, Stevenson, Baudelaire, etc. The techniques of 'suspense', to which the authors of the modern detective tales so often resort, can be, somehow, looked upon as the ultimate issue of this early type of fiction.

II. Use the following expressions in the synopsis of a detective story you have recently read:

emotional sense of wonder, intellectual curiosity, to be reflected in, to be applied to, type of fiction, to have a counterpart in, to be designed to thrill the reader by, horrible murder, to be set in, technique of suspense, to resort to, to look upon, the ultimate issue.

III. Which of the writers in Notes 1, 2, 3 have you heard of? Can you name any of their works?

IV. What period in the development of English literature do these writers belong to?

✓ *John Dryden,*

- ✓ *Jane Austin,*
- ✓ *Thomas Carlyle,*
- ✓ *William Thackeray,*
- ✓ *Richard Sheridan,*
- ✓ *Robert Burns,*
- ✓ *Ann Radcliffe,*
- ✓ *Robert Browning,*
- ✓ *Samuel Johnson.*

V. Put articles where necessary:

... Romantic period proper is generally dated from ... publication of ... *Lyrical Ballads*, ... collection of poems by Wordsworth and Coleridge of which ... first volume appeared in 1798. ... *Lyrical Ballads* were in sharp contrast with ... artificial literature of ... day for ... utmost simplicity of their subject and diction.

With ... names of Wordsworth and Coleridge is generally associated that of Southey, and ... three are all included in ... conventional designation of Lake Poets from ... fact that they all lived in ... Lake District in Cumberland, famous for its extremely picturesque scenery. They belonged to ... so-called first romantic generation, ... generation that hailed ... French Revolution with wild enthusiasm and lived to see their hopes shattered by ... excesses of ... revolutionaries.

There followed ... second romantic generation of which ... most representative personalities were Byron, Shelley and Keats. By ... time these poets began to write their verse, all ... brilliant expectations of freedom and justice had already gone and Europe was experiences ... reaction of ... Triple Alliance.

VI. Explain the use of articles in the text above.

THE HISTORY OF ENGLISH LITERATURE
Supplement 3

COMPLEMENTARY TEXTS

Text 1

LATE VICTORIAN TO MODERNIST
1880-1930

We may not be sure what the spirit of an age is, but we can usually tell when it is giving way to something else. What G.K. Chesterton called, in a book title, the 'Victorian Age in Literature' seemed to be at its zenith when Dickens died in 1870; but ten years later, at the death of George Eliot, the signs of change were unmistakable. The High Victorian was becoming Late Victorian. The phrase *fin de siècle* came into common use, pointing to a preoccupation with what the end of the century might portend. John Gross has summed up the shifting mood in *The Rise and Fall of the Man of Letters*:

Whatever one puts it down to - economic difficulties, foreign competition - it is undoubtedly possible to detect by the 1880's a widespread faltering of Victorian self-confidence, a new edginess and uncertainty about the future. Among writers, such a climate might have been supposed to favour a mood of determined realism, and so, in some cases, it did. But the commonest reaction was withdrawal, a retreat into nostalgia, exoticism, fine writing, *belles-lettres*.

There are interesting signs of changing attitudes in the correspondence of two Victorian clergymen of literary inclinations; one, the Jesuit Gerard Manley Hopkins (1844-89), was a poet of genius, though unrecognized in his lifetime; the other, Richard Watson Dixon, was a canon of the Church of England and a talented minor poet of Pre-Raphaelite affinities. Hopkins and Dixon lived obscure lives, remote from the main

currents of Victorian culture; but they were widely read in the literature of their time and had decided opinions about it which they exchanged in letters. In January 1879 Dixon commented on the defects of Tennyson's widely admired 'Locksley Hall', finding in it 'only a man making an unpleasant and rather ungentlemanly row. Tennyson is a great outsider'. In his reply Hopkins tries to defend Tennyson - 'Come what may he will be one of our greatest poets' - and praises the pure achievement of the early poems and In Memoriam. But he is scathingly dismissive of the Idylls of the King, which was the crown of Tennyson's public reputation: 'He should have called them Charades from the Middle Ages.'

Note 1.

A selection of writers of the period: *William Yeats (1865-1939)*, *Oscar Wilde (1854-1900)*, *Bernard Shaw (1856-1950)*, *Robert Louis Stevenson (1850-1894)*, *Henry James (1843-1916)*, *Thomas Hardy (1840-1928)*, *Arnold Bennett (1867-1931)*, *H.G. Wells (1866-1946)*, *Rudyard Kipling (1865-1936)*, *John Galsworthy (1867-1933)*, *Ezra Pound (1885-1972)*, *D.H. Lawrence (1885-1930)*, *James Joyce (1882-1941)*. *T.S. Eliot (1888-1965)*, *Virginia Woolf (1882-1941)*.

Text 2

MID-TWENTIETH-CENTURY LITERATURE

1930-1980

The thirties felt, and feel, different from the twenties. It is not merely that already in 1930 the foundations were being laid for the Second World War. The rise to power in Germany of Hitler and the Nazi Party were cause for increasing anxiety, but anxiety is not the sole characteristic of the decade. There went with it a sense of release that at last the worst could be imagined and beyond it something better. Today the struggle', wrote Auden in

his stirring poem on behalf of the Spanish republicans, putting off to tomorrow the pleasures very much in his mind at that moment:

*Tomorrow the rediscovery of romantic love;
The photographing of ravens; all the fun under
Liberty's masterful shadow...*

It's 'all the fun' potential in human life that makes the struggle worthwhile. Sometimes it seems that the struggle is fun in itself.

For most writers and intellectuals in the thirties, the struggle was that for a juster society, and in its international aspect it was a fight against Fascism. This was a highly political decade.

Text3

MODERN ENGLISH LITERATURE

Since the Second World War there have been great changes in literature and in the arts. These changes have much to do with the breaking down of social barriers and the improvement of education. Wider education has made young people from every social background conscious of the arts, and has awakened their interest in them. The pop revolution of the 1960s also did much to bring a new vigour to the world of art, literature and music. It encouraged members of the younger generation to express their thoughts and feelings, and it hastened a break with the traditions of the past. Today, artists, musicians and writers have a much wider public than they had before the war. Far more people now read books and go to the theatre, concerts and picture galleries.

NOVELS AND PLAYS

Between the two world wars, serious novelists and playwrights were read and appreciated mainly by people from

middle and upper-class backgrounds. These people had money, and this gave them opportunities for education and leisure which were beyond the reach of the poorer classes. For the same reason, the writers tended to come from the same kind of background, although there were many exceptions. The novelist, D.H. Lawrence, for example, was the son of a miner. But Lawrence's books were bought and read by middle-class readers, and the language which he used was literary, rather than popular.

Lawrence, like other writers of the 1920s and 1930s - Aldous Huxley, H.G. Wells, and the older men, George Bernard Shaw and John Galsworthy - was presenting his public with his own view of life. He was hoping to persuade his readers to think like himself. Many of the serious writers of the period were concerned with social and political problems. Their plays and novels demanded social reforms. They made amusing and often bitter comments on the injustices and absurdities of life - especially middle-class life. The novelist, Evelyn Waugh, called one of his novels *Vile Bodies* (vile means extremely ugly and unpleasant). Some novelists gave horrible warnings about the kind of future that mankind might have to face. Huxley's amusing *Brave New World* and Orwell's frightening *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (written in the 1940s) are still taken very seriously by many people today.

Other writers, like Virginia Woolf and the Irishman, James Joyce, were more interested in thoughts and feelings than in social life, and they expressed their thoughts in a language which was sometimes extremely difficult to understand. Playwrights, too, experimented with language. In the late 1930s and in the 1940s T.S. Eliot and Christopher Fry wrote serious plays in verse. At the same time there were plenty of novelists and playwrights whose only aim was to excite, to amuse and to move to tears. The most popular and successful of these writers was Noel Coward. As a result, people tended to divide writers into two kinds - serious, or intellectual, and light, or non-intellectual.

Then, in the 1950s, a literary revolution took place. A new kind of literature burst upon the scene. The writers of this new literature - Kingsley Amis, John Wain, John Braine, John Osborne, Arnold Wesker and Alan Silitoe - became known as the "angry young men". They came from working-class and lower middle-class backgrounds, and they tended to be left-wing. They wrote about the ugly and sordid realities of life as they knew it, and they wrote "angrily". John Osborne called his first play *Look Back in Anger*.

These new novels and plays were not written in literary or intellectual language, but in the ordinary and sometimes ugly language of daily life. The scene was often set in the dark back rooms and kitchens of northern industrial cities. The "heroes" were not usually men and women with ideas or ideals. More often they were bitter and weak, defeated by the small dramas and miseries of everyday life.

Many people were shocked by the violence of these young writers, who scorned so many social and literary traditions. But their talent was soon recognised by the critics, by the younger generation and even by the intellectuals, for they had something new to say. Their writing was often deliberately anti-intellectual, and yet they forced people to think. The ugliness and meanness of life remains a favourite subject for novels and stage plays, as well as for films and television plays. The writers of today are interested in the small details of life. They like to show what goes on beneath the surface, whether it be in private or family life, or in factories, big business, offices, universities, and even in sport. Most modern writers are observers rather than commentators.

Here are the thoughts of the working-class hero of John Braine's novel, *Room at the Top*, as he watches a smart young man climb into a smart car (an Aston Martin) beside a smart young woman:

"He hadn't ever had to work for anything he wanted: it had

all been given to him. The salary I had been so pleased about, an increase from grade ten to grade nine, would seem a pittance to him. The suit in which I fancied myself so much - my best suit - would seem cheap and nasty to him. He wouldn't have a 'best' suit: all his clothes would be 'best'.

"For the moment I hated him... I tasted the sourness of envy... I wanted an Aston Martin... I wanted a girl with a Riviera suntan. These were my rights, I felt..."

Some writers, among them Iris Murdoch, William Golding, who won the Nobel prize for literature in 1983, Lawrence Durrell, Muriel Spark, do more than observe. They explore the reasons why people act as they do. These writers are perhaps following in the path of Virginia Woolf and other writers of the 1920s and 1930s. William Golding's deeply disturbing novel, *Lord of the Flies*, symbolises the cruelty of human society, although outwardly it is about the relationships and rivalries of little boys. Most modern novelists and playwrights, however, are simply looking at life and making few comments.

Harold Pinter, perhaps the most distinctive playwright during the 1960s to 1980s, claims that he has no social or symbolic message. He says that he only puts down what he sees, and that people can read into his plays and sketches what they like.

Pinter's characters are ordinary people, living simple, unexciting lives. Their conversations are completely unintellectual, and sometimes they hardly talk at all. When they do speak they want to be listened to, but they do not want to listen. Most of them have one thing in common. They cannot communicate with one another, that is, they cannot understand each other's thoughts and feelings. They are lonely and unhappy. Some say they symbolise the loneliness of people today.

Since the first plays of Osborne and Pinter were written there has been a renaissance of playwrights in Britain. Many of these playwrights and also performers, directors and designers are

known and appreciated all over the world.

More people are reading serious novels and more publicity is being given to new novels. For example, each year in October newspapers and their readers discuss with great interest the possible winners of the Booker Prize. This annual prize is awarded to the author of the best novel of the year.

POETS

Poetry became much more popular among young people in the 1960s to 1980s.

School children and university students wrote poetry and read it to one another in poetry clubs. There are still public poetry readings - in small hired rooms and even in big concert halls. Modern young poets give live performances and need an audience almost as much as musicians do. Some of this poetry is published by small, non profit-making printing presses. It is sometimes direct, sometimes symbolic. But whatever its form it expresses a feeling for the realities of life - a dissatisfaction with society, a hatred of war, materialism, racialism and class, a longing for universal love. Some of it has been accepted by the major publishers and is bought and read - not only by young people, but by many older people as well. The pop revolution had a great influence on poetry. A group of young working-class poets from Liverpool made a name for themselves nationally and were known as the Mersey Poets.

*We have lost interest in wars and political situations,
There are craters in our hearts,
We must not neglect them.
Let the pink bird sing.*

(Brian Patten, one of the leading Mersey Poets).

"When in public, poetry should take off its clothes and wave to the nearest person in sight", said Brian Patten. "It should be

seen in the company of thieves and lovers rather than that of journalists and publishers".

COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

1. What important changes have taken place in British society since World War II?
2. What effect did these changes have on the arts?
3. What is significant about Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* and George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four*?
4. What is the main difference between the authors of post-war and pre-war Britain?
5. What shocked some people about the "young" writers of the post-war period?
6. What does the poetry of many poets express today?

EXERCISES

I. Speak on the novel or the story written by British writer according to the following outline:

subject, theme; plot; setting; characters; portrayal of human relationships; ideas, views, attitudes; style; spirit, atmosphere, mood.

II. Comment on the following quotations.

- ✓ "A novel is never anything but philosophy put into images".
Albert Camus.
- ✓ "A literary movement consists of five or six people who live in the same town and hate each other cordially". *George Moore.*
- ✓ "Medicine is my lawful wife. Literature is my mistress".
Anton Chekhov.

- ✓ "The answers you get from literature depend upon the questions you pose". *Margaret Atwood*.
- ✓ "In literature as in love we are astounded by what is chosen by others". *Andre Maurois*.
- ✓ "Literature flourishes best when it is half a trade and half an art". *William R. Inge*.

III. Think of any novel, play by a British author you have read. Say why you liked or disliked it? Were the characters true to life? Were the situations dramatic and at the same time credible? Were the background scenery and minor characters well drawn? Was the author's style simple or complicated?

THE HISTORY OF ENGLISH LITERATURE*Supplement 4***SAMPLE TEXTS**

HENRY FIELDING *Joseph Andrews* (1742)

Showing and Telling

"You are too much inclined to passion, child, and have set your affections so absolutely on this young woman, that, if G - required her at your hands, I fear you would reluctantly part with her. Now, believe me, no Christian ought so to set his heart on any person or thing in this world, but that, whenever it shall be required or taken from him in any manner by Divine Providence, he may be able, peaceably, quietly, and contentedly, to resign it." At which words one came hastily in, and acquainted Mr Adams that his youngest son was drowned. He stood silent a moment, and soon began to stamp about the room and deplore his loss with the bitterest agony. Joseph, who was overwhelmed with concern likewise, recovered himself sufficiently to endeavour to comfort the parson; in which attempt he used many arguments that he had at several times remembered out of his own discourses, both in private and public (for he was a great enemy to the passions, and preached nothing more than the conquest of them by reason and grace), but he was not at leisure now to hearken to his advice. "Child, child," said he, "do not go about impossibilities. Had it been any other of my children, I could have borne it with patience; but my little prattler, the darling and comfort of my old age - the little wretch to be snatched out of life just at his entrance into it; the sweetest, best-tempered boy, who never did a thing to offend me. It was but this morning I gave him his first lesson in Quae Genus. This was the very book he learnt; poor child! it is of no further use to thee now. He would have made the best scholar, and have been an ornament to the Church; - such parts and such

goodness never met in one so young." "And the handsomest lad too," says Mrs Adams, recovering from a swoon in Fanny's arms. - "My poor Jacky, shall I never see thee more?" cries the parson. - "Yes, surely," says Joseph, "and in a better place; you will meet again, never to part more." - I believe the parson did not hear these words, for he paid little regard to them, but went on lamenting, whilst the tears trickled down into his bosom. At last he cried out, "Where is my little darling?" and was sallying out, when, to his great surprise and joy, in which I hope the reader will sympathize, he met his son in a wet condition indeed, but alive and running towards him.

FICTIONAL DISCOURSE constantly alternates between showing us what happened and telling us what happened. The purest form of showing is the quoted speech of characters, in which language exactly mirrors the event (because the event is linguistic). The purest form of telling is authorial summary, in which the conciseness and abstraction of the narrator's language effaces the particularity and individuality of the characters and their actions. A novel written entirely in the mode of summary would, for this reason, be almost unreadable. But summary has its uses: it can, for instance, accelerate the tempo of a narrative, hurrying us through events which would be uninteresting, or too interesting – therefore distracting, if lingered over. It is easy to examine this effect in the work of Henry Fielding, because he was writing before the technique of free indirect style, in which authorial speech and characters' speech are fused together, had been discovered (see Section 9). In his novels the boundary between these two kinds of discourse is clear and unambiguous.

Parson Abraham Adams is a benevolent, generous, unworldly man, but he is also a great comic character - one of the most memorable in English fiction - because he is constantly entrammelled in contradiction. There is always a disparity

between what he believes the world to be (full of people as altruistic as himself) and what it is really like (full of selfish opportunists); between what he preaches (a rather austere dogmatic Christianity) and what he practices (ordinary instinctive human decency). This contrast between illusion and reality (which Fielding borrowed, with acknowledgment, from Cervantes's characterization of Don Quixote) makes him a constant figure of fun - but a sympathetic one, because his heart is in the right place even if his judgment is unreliable.

In this excerpt, Parson Adams is lecturing the hero, Joseph, about his impatience to marry his sweetheart Fanny, with whom he has just been reunited after a long and hazardous separation. Adams subjects the young man to a lengthy sermon, warning him against lust, and lack of trust in Providence. He invokes the example of Abraham in the Old Testament, who was ready to sacrifice his son, Isaac, to God if required. This homily is quoted verbatim, "shown". Just as Adams has declared that we should always serenely accept the sacrifices God demands of us, his principles are put cruelly to the test: "At which words one came hastily in, and acquainted Mr. Adams that his youngest son was drowned." This is the baldest kind of summary. "Acquainted" seems a coldly formal word in the context, and we are not even told who "one" is. The lamentations of the bereaved father and Joseph's attempts to comfort him are also summarized - but Adams's rejection of Joseph's counsel is "shown", quoted in full, "Child, child, do not go about impossibilities ...", to emphasize the contradiction between his practice and his preaching.

Fielding is playing a risky game here. On the one hand we register the contradiction as the comic confirmation of a familiar character trait; on the other hand there is nothing funny about the death of a child. Our inclination to smile at Abraham Adams's failure to live up to the sacrificial piety of his biblical namesake is checked by the pathos of his situation, and the naturalness of his

grief. We hesitate, uncertain how to respond.

Fielding has, however, prepared a way out of the impasse, for the characters and for the reader. After a few more lines of lamentation from Mr. and Mrs. Adams, and vain attempts to console them by Joseph, Adams discovers that his son has not been drowned after all. And it is not long, of course, before Adams blithely resumes his sermon to Joseph about Christian resignation.

The narrator's explanation for the child's survival is that "The person who brought the news of his misfortune had been a little too eager, as people sometimes are, from, I believe, no very good principle, to relate ill news, and having seen him fall into the river, instead of running to his assistance, directly ran to acquaint his father of a fate which he had concluded to be inevitable," leaving him to be rescued by somebody else. This explanation is acceptable partly because it belongs to a series of examples of human folly and spitefulness that run through the novel; and partly because it comes very quickly after the event. If the character of the messenger had been filled in in more detail, and his speech describing the incident given in direct form, the whole tempo of the scene would have been more "lifelike" and its emotive effect quite different. The circumstances of the drowning of the little boy would have acquired a distressing particularity, and the comic mood of the novel would have been destroyed irretrievably. When the report was shown to be false we might, as readers, have felt that we had been exploited. Fielding avoids these unwanted effects by a judicious use of summary. [2 - pp.121-124]

JANE AUSTEN Emma

Beginning

Emma Woodhouse, handsome, clever, and rich, with a comfortable home and happy disposition, seemed to unite some

of the best blessings of existence; and had lived nearly twenty-one years in the world with very little to distress or vex her.

She was the youngest of the two daughters of a most affectionate, indulgent father, and had, in consequence of her sister's marriage, been mistress of his house from a very early period. Her mother had died too long ago for her to have more than an indistinct remembrance of her caresses, and her place had been supplied by an excellent woman as governess, who had fallen little short of a mother in affection.

Sixteen years had Miss Taylor been in Mr. Woodhouse's family, less as a governess than a friend, very fond of both daughters, but particularly of Emma. Between them it was more the intimacy of sisters. Even before Miss Taylor had ceased to hold the nominal office of governess, the mildness of her temper had hardly allowed her to impose any restraint; and the shadow of authority being now long passed away, they had been living together as friend and friend very mutually attached, and Emma doing just what she liked; highly esteeming Miss Taylor's judgment, but directed chiefly by her own.

The real evils indeed of Emma's situation were the power of having rather too much her own way, and a disposition to think a little too well of herself; these were the disadvantages which threatened alloy to her many enjoyments. The danger, however, was at present so unperceived; that they did not by any means rank as misfortunes with her.

Sorrow came - a gentle sorrow - but not at all in the shape of any disagreeable consciousness. - Miss Taylor married.

WHEN DOES A NOVEL BEGIN? The question is almost as difficult to answer as the question, when does the human embryo become a person? Certainly the creation of a novel rarely begins with the penning or typing of its first words. Most writers do some preliminary work, if it is only in their heads. Many prepare

the ground carefully over weeks or months, making diagrams of the plot, compiling C.V.s for their characters, filling a notebook with ideas, settings, situations, jokes, to be drawn on in the process of composition. Every writer has his or her own way of working.

Henry James made notes for *The Spoils of Poynton* almost as long and almost as interesting as the finished novel. Muriel Spark, I understand, broods mentally on the concept of a new novel and does not set pen to paper until she has thought of a satisfactory title and opening sentence.

For the reader, however, the novel always begins with that opening sentence (which may not, of course, be the first sentence the novelist originally wrote). And then the next sentence, and then the sentence after that — When does the beginning of a novel end, is another difficult question to answer. Is it the first paragraph, the first few pages, or the first chapter? However one defines it, the beginning of a novel is a threshold, separating the real world we inhabit from the world the novelist has imagined. It should therefore, as the phrase goes, "draw us in".

This is not an easy task. We are not yet familiar with the author's tone of voice, range of vocabulary, syntactic habits. We read a book slowly and hesitantly, at first. We have a lot of new information to absorb and remember, such as the characters' names, their relationships of affinity and consanguinity, the contextual details of time and place, without which the story cannot be followed. Is all this effort going to be worthwhile? Most readers will give an author the benefit of the doubt for at least a few pages, before deciding to back out over the threshold. With the two specimens shown here, however, our hesitation is likely to be minimal or non-existent. We are "hooked" by the very first sentence in each case.

Jane Austen's opening is classical: lucid, measured, objective, with ironic implication concealed beneath the elegant

velvet glove of the style. How subtly the first sentence sets up the heroine for a fall. This is to be the reverse of the Cinderella story, the triumph of an undervalued heroine that previously attracted Jane Austen's imagination from *Pride and Prejudice* to *Mansfield Park*. Emma is a Princess who must be humbled before she finds true happiness. "Handsome" (rather than conventionally pretty or beautiful – a hint of masculine will-to-power, perhaps, in that androgynous epithet), "clever" (an ambiguous term for intelligence, sometimes applied derogatively, as in "too clever for her own good") and "rich", with all its biblical and proverbial associations of the moral dangers of wealth: these three adjectives, so elegantly combined (a matter of stress and phonology - try rearranging them) encapsulate the deceptiveness of Emma's "seeming" contentment. Having lived "nearly twenty-one years in the world with very little to distress or vex her", she is due for a rude awakening. Nearly twenty-one, the traditional age of majority, Emma must now take responsibility for her own life, and for a woman in early nineteenth-century bourgeois society this meant deciding whether and whom to marry. Emma is unusually free in this respect, since she is already "mistress" of her household, a circumstance likely to breed arrogance, especially as she has been brought up by a governess who supplied a mother's affection but not (by implication) a mother's discipline.

This suggestion is made more emphatically in the third paragraph; but at the same time, interestingly enough, we begin to hear the voice of Emma herself in the discourse, as well as the judicious, objective voice of the narrator. "Between them it was more the intimacy of sisters." "They had been living together as friend and friend . . ." In these phrases we seem to hear Emma's own, rather self-satisfied description of her relationship with her governess, one which allowed her to do "just what she liked." The ironic structure of the paragraph's conclusion, "highly esteeming

Miss Taylor's judgment, but directed chiefly by her own," symmetrically balances two statements that are logically incompatible, and thus indicates the flaw in Emma's character that is explicitly stated by the narrator in the fourth paragraph. With the marriage of Miss Taylor, the story proper begins: deprived of Miss Taylor's company and mature counsel, Emma takes up a young protégée, Harriet, who encourages her vanity, and on whose behalf she begins to indulge in a matchmaking intrigue, with disastrous results. [2 - pp.3-8]

CHARLES DICKENS *Bleak House*
Weather

London. Michaelmas term lately over and the Lord Chancellor sitting in Lincoln's Inn Hall. As much mud in the streets, as if the waters had but Implacable November weather newly retired from the face of the earth, and it would not be wonderful to meet a Megalosaurus, forty feet long or so, waddling like an elephantine lizard up Holborn Hill. Smoke lowering down from chimney-pots, making a soft black drizzle with flakes of soot in it as big as full-grown snowflakes - gone into mourning, one might imagine, for the death of the sun. Dogs, undistinguishable in mire. Horses, scarcely better; splashed to their very blinkers. Foot passengers, jostling one another's umbrellas, in a general infection of ill temper, and losing their foot-hold at street corners, where tens of thousands of other foot passengers have been slipping and sliding since the day broke (if this day ever broke), adding new deposits to the crust upon crust of mud, sticking at those points tenaciously to the pavement, and accumulating at compound interest.

DICKENS HITS US OVER THE HEAD WITH THE DESCRIPTION OF WEATHER in the famous opening paragraph of *Bleak House*. "Implacable November weather." The

personification of the weather as "implacable" is a commonplace colloquialism, but here it carries suggestions of divine displeasure, being in close conjunction with allusions to the Old Testament. "As if the waters had but newly retired from the face of the earth," echoes both the description of the Creation in Genesis and the story of the Flood. These Biblical allusions are mixed up in a very Victorian way with a more modern, post-Darwinian cosmology in the references to the Megalosaurus and the running down of the solar system from entropy. The total effect is a startling feat of defamiliarization.

On one level this is a realistic picture of nineteenth-century London streets in bad weather, a montage of typical details quite simply and literally described: smoke lowering down from chimney-pots . . . dogs undistinguishable in mire . . . horses splashed to their very blinkers . . . jostling umbrellas. But Dickens's metaphoric imagination transforms this commonplace scene into an apocalyptic vision of the proud capital of the British Empire reverting to primitive swamp, or anticipating the final extinction of all life on earth. The metaphorical double somersault from soot flake, to snowflake in mourning, to the death of the sun, is particularly stunning.

It is a scenario of a kind we meet later in science fiction (the vision of the Megalosaurus waddling up Holborn Hill anticipates King Kong scaling the Empire State Building, the "death of the sun" the chilling finale of H. G. Wells's *The Time Machine*) and in postmodernist prophets of doom like Martin Amis. It sets up for denunciation the idea of a society that has denatured itself by greed and corruption, which Dickens is about to examine in his many-stranded plot centering on a disputed estate. Wittily, the mud accumulates at compound interest here in the City of London, reminding us of the Biblical condemnation of money as filthy lucre. The Lord Chancellor described at the beginning of the passage (in a series of terse statements like headlines from

"News at Ten") presiding over the court of Chancery, seems also to preside over the weather, and the equation is clinched some paragraphs later: "Never can there come fog too thick, never can there come mud and mire too deep, to assort with the groping and floundering condition which this High Court of Chancery, most pestilent of hoary sinners, holds, this day, in the sight of heaven and earth." [2 - pp.84-88]

THOMAS HARDY *A Pair of Blue Eyes* (1873)

Suspense

At first, when death appeared improbable because it had never visited him before, Knight could think of no future, nor of anything connected with his past. He could only look sternly at Nature's treacherous attempt to put an end to him, and strive to thwart her.

From the fact that the cliff formed the inner face of the segment of a hollow cylinder, having the sky for a top and the sea for a bottom, which enclosed the bay to the extent of nearly a semicircle, he could see the vertical face curving round on each side of him. He looked far down the façade, and realized more thoroughly how it threatened him. Grimness was in every feature, and to its very bowels the inimical shape was desolation.

By one of those familiar conjunctions of things where with the inanimate world baits the mind of man when he pauses in moments of suspense, opposite Knight's eyes was an imbedded fossil, standing forth in low relief from the rock. It was a creature with eyes. The eyes, dead and turned to stone, were even now regarding him. It was one of the early crustaceans called Trilobites. Separated by millions of years in their lives, Knight and this underling seemed to have met in their place of death. It was the single instance within reach of his vision of anything that had ever been alive and had had a body to save, as he himself had now.

NOVELS ARE NARRATIVES, and narrative, whatever its medium - words, film, strip-cartoon - holds the interest of an audience by raising questions in their minds, and delaying the answers. The questions are broadly of two kinds, having to do with causality (e.g. who done it?) and temporality (e.g. what will happen next?) each exhibited in a very pure form by the classic detective story and the adventure story, respectively. Suspense is an effect especially associated with the adventure story, and with the hybrid of detective story and adventure story known as the thriller. Such narratives are designed to put the hero or heroine repeatedly into situations of extreme jeopardy, thus exciting in the reader emotions of sympathetic fear and anxiety as to the outcome.

Because suspense is particularly associated with popular forms of fiction it has often been despised, or at least demoted, by literary novelists of the modern period. In *Ulysses*, for instance, James Joyce superimposed the banal and inconclusive events of a day in modern Dublin upon the heroic and satisfyingly closed story of Odysseus's return from the Trojan War, implying that reality is less exciting and more indeterminate than traditional fiction would have us believe. But there have been writers of stature, especially in the nineteenth century, who consciously borrowed the suspense creating devices of popular fiction and turned them to their own purposes.

One such was Thomas Hardy, whose first published novel, *Desperate Remedies* (1871), was a "sensation-novel" in the style of Wilkie Collins. His third, *A Pair of Blue Eyes* (1873), was more lyrical and psychological, drawing on Hardy's courtship of his first wife in the romantic setting of north Cornwall, and was the favourite novel of that master of modern autobiographical fiction, Marcel Proust. But it contains a classic scene of suspense that was, as far as I know, entirely invented. The word itself derives from the Latin word meaning "to hang", and there could

hardly be a situation more productive of suspense than that of a man clinging by his finger-tips to the face of a cliff, unable to climb to safety -hence the generic term, "clifhanger".

About halfway through *A Pair of Blue Eyes*, the young and somewhat fickle heroine, Elfride, daughter of a Cornish vicar, takes a telescope to the top of a high cliff overlooking the Bristol Channel, to view the ship that is bringing home from India the young architect to whom she is secretly engaged. She is accompanied by Henry Knight, a friend of her stepmother's, a man of maturer years and intellectual interests, who has made overtures to her, and to whom she is becoming guiltily attracted. As they sit on the cliff top, Knight's hat is blown towards the edge, and when he tries to retrieve it he finds himself unable to climb back up the slippery one-in-three slope that terminates in a sheer drop of several hundred feet. Elfride's impetuous efforts to assist him only make things worse, and as she clammers back to safety she inadvertently sends him sliding further towards disaster. "As he slowly slid inch by inch . . . Knight made a last desperate dash at the lowest tuft of vegetation - the last outlying knot of starved herbage where the rock appeared in all its bareness. It arrested his further descent. Knight was now literally *suspended* by his arms . . ." (*my italics*). Elfride disappears from Knight's view, presumably seeking assistance, though he knows they are miles from any human habitation.

What happens next? Will Knight survive, and if so, how? Suspense can only be sustained by delaying the answers to these questions. One way of doing this, beloved of the cinema (whose effects Hardy often anticipated in his intensely visual fiction) would be to crosscut between the anguish of Knight and the frantic efforts of the heroine to effect a rescue. But Hardy wants to surprise Knight (and the reader) with Elfride's response to the emergency, and therefore restricts the narration of the scene to Knight's point of view. The suspense is extended by a detailed

account of his thoughts as he clings to the cliff-face, and these thoughts are those of a Victorian intellectual, on whom recent discoveries in geology and natural history, especially the work of Darwin, have made a deep impression. The passage in which Knight realizes that he is staring into the eyes, "dead and turned to stone", of a fossilized arthropod millions of years old, is one that perhaps only Hardy could have written. His work is notable for such breathtaking shifts of perspective, which display the fragile human figure dwarfed by a Universe whose vast dimensions of space and time were just beginning to be truly apprehended. And invariably his characters, fallaciously but understandably, read into this disparity of scale a kind of cosmic malice. Confronting the dead eyes of the fossil, which have replaced the living, seductive blue eyes of Elfride in his field of vision, Knight acquires a new understanding, both poignant and bleak, of his own mortality.

The scene is extended for some pages by the same means: philosophical reflections on geology, prehistory and the apparent spitefulness of Nature (the wind whips Knight's clothing, the rain stings his face, a red sun looks on "with a drunken leer") punctuated by questions that keep the wire of narrative suspense taut: "Was he to die? . . . He had hoped for deliverance, but what could a girl do? He dared not move an inch. Was Death really stretching out his hand?"

Elfride, of course, rescues him. How she does it I will not divulge, except to say, by way of encouragement to those of you who haven't yet got round to reading this delightful book, that it entails taking off all her clothes. [2 - pp.13-16]

MARTIN AMIS *Money* (1984)

The Sense of Place

In LA, you can't do anything unless you drive. Now I can't do anything unless I drink. And the drink-drive combination, it

really isn't possible out there. If you so much as loosen your seatbelt or drop your ash or pick your nose, then it's an Alcatraz autopsy with the questions asked later. Any indiscipline, you feel, any variation, and there's a bullhorn, a set of scope sights, and a coptered pig drawing a bead on your rug.

So what can a poor boy do? You come out of the hotel, the Vraimont. Over boiling Watts the downtown skyline carries a smear of God's green snot. You walk left, you walk right, you are a bank rat on a busy river. This restaurant serves no drink, this one serves no meat, this one serves no heterosexuals. You can get your chimp shampooed, you can get your dick tattooed, twenty-four hour, but can you get lunch? And should you see a sign on the far side of the street flashing BEEF - BOOZE - NO STRINGS, then you can forget it. The only way to get across the road is to be born there. All the ped-xing signs say DON'T WALK, all of them, all the time. That is the message, the content of Los Angeles: don't walk. Stay inside. Don't walk. Drive. Don't walk. Run! I tried the cabs. No use. The cabbies are all Satumians who aren't even sure whether this is a right planet or a left planet. The first thing you have to do, every trip, is teach them how to drive.

MARTIN AMIS IS A LATE EXPONENT OF THE DICKENSIAN TRADITION OF URBAN GOTHIC. His fascinated and appalled gaze at the postindustrial city mediates an apocalyptic vision of culture and society in a terminal state of decay. As with Dickens, his settings often seem more animated than his characters, as if the life has been drained out of people to re-emerge in a demonic, destructive form in things: streets, machines, gadgets.

The narrator of *Money*, John Self (Amis also cultivates a Dickensian playfulness with names) is not exactly a complex or sympathetic character. A scrofulous yuppie, addicted to fast food

and fast cars, junk food and pornography, he commutes between England and America in his efforts to tie up a film deal that will make him rich. London and New York are the chief locations of the action, with the latter having the edge in physical and moral squalor, but the nature of his business inevitably takes Self to Los Angeles, the capital of the movie industry.

The challenge of the novel's chosen form is to make the style both eloquently descriptive of the urban wasteland and expressive of the narrator's slobbish, tunnel-visioned, philistine character. Amis manages this difficult trick by disguising his literary skills behind a barrage of streetwise slang, profanity, obscenities and jokes. The narrator speaks in a mid-Atlantic lingo that is partly derived from popular culture and the mass media and partly Amis's plausible invention. To decipher the first paragraph of this passage, for instance, you have to know that Alcatraz is a famous Californian prison, that "pig" is a term of abuse for policeman, that "drawing a bead" means taking aim, that "rug" is American slang for toupee (though Self uses it to refer to real hair), and guess that "coptered" is a participle derived from "helicopter". The metaphor for the city's polluted sky, "a smear of God's green snot", suggesting the deity of the Old Testament glowering over this latter day Sodom, is as startling as T. S. Eliot's evening "spread out against the sky/ Like a patient etherized upon a table" in "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock", and owes something to Stephen Dedalus's description of the sea as "snot-green", in the first episode of *Ulysses*. But whereas Prufrock has high-cultural pretensions and Stephen is consciously travestying Homer's favourite epithet for the sea, "wine-dark", John Self seems to be merely indulging in schoolboy nastiness, and this distracts us from the literary sophistication of the image.

The key trope of this description of Los Angeles is hyperbole, or overstatement. In that respect it resembles another skaz narrative we looked at earlier, *The Catcher in the Rye*. But

Amis's passage is much more of a rhetorical set-piece than anything to be found in Salinger's novel. It performs a series of comically exaggerated variations on the commonplace theme that Los Angeles is a city dedicated to and dominated by the motor car ("The only way to get across the road is to be born there"); and on the slightly less commonplace observations that America favours highly specialized retail outlets, and that American taxi-drivers are often recent immigrants who don't know the way to anywhere.

On arriving in Boston recently, I took a cab whose driver had to make three attempts, assisted by radio-telephone consultation in Russian with his control, before he could find his way out of the airport. It's difficult to exaggerate that kind of incompetence, but Amis found a way: "The cabbies are all Saturnians who aren't even sure whether this is a right planet or a left planet. The first thing you have to do, every trip, is teach them how to drive." An echo of the homely seat-belt safety slogan, "Clunk Click, every trip", follows fast on the flip allusion to science fiction - Amis's prose delights in such juxtapositions, culled from the dreck of contemporary urban consciousness. The echo also contributes to the jaunty, finger-snapping rhythm of the whole passage, which threatens at one particularly cherishable moment to break into rhyming couplets ("You can get your chimp shampooed, you can get your dick tattooed").

The danger of most set-piece descriptions of place (the novels of Sir Walter Scott provide plenty of examples) is that a succession of well-formed declarative sentences, combined with the suspension of narrative interest, will send the reader to sleep. No risk of that here. The present tense describes both the place and the narrator's movement through it. The shifts in verbal mood - from indicative ("You come out of the hotel") to interrogative ("but can you get lunch?") to imperative ("Don't walk. Drive. Don't walk. Run!") and the generalizing second-person pronoun ("You walk left, you walk right") - involve the reader in the

process. After many pages of this sort of thing you might fall asleep from exhaustion, but not from boredom. [2 - pp.56-60]

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74

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