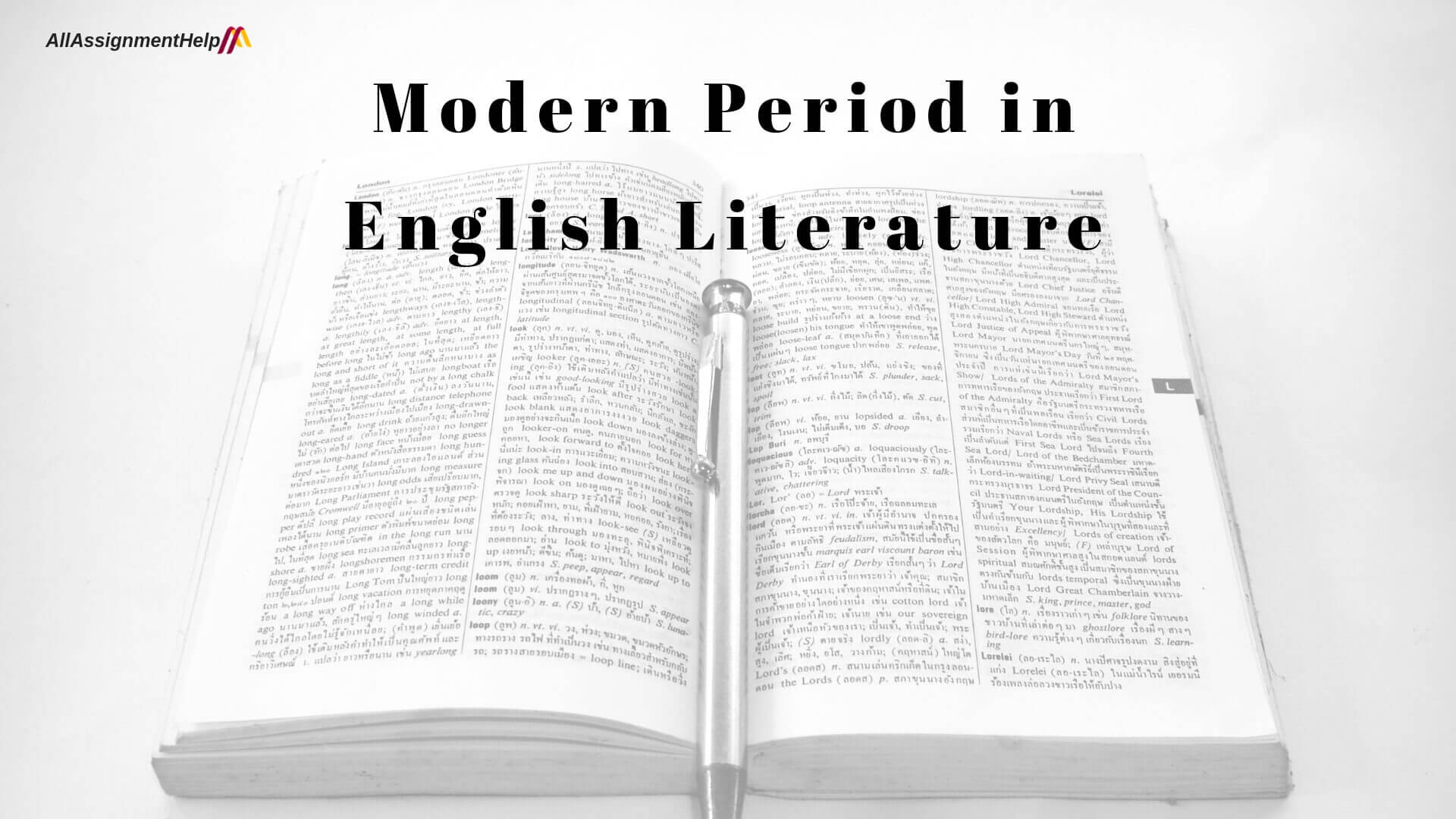
**Modern Period in English Literature**

[Susan White](https://www.allassignmenthelp.com/blog/author/susanwhite/) / June 22, 2019



**Introduction to modern period**

Modern period in the English literature begins with the 20th century and remain till 1965. The period saw an abrupt break away from the old ways of interacting with the world. In all the previous periods experimentation and individualism were highly discouraged but With the onset of the modern period both these things became virtues. There were many cultural shocks with the beginning of modernism. The blow of the modern age were the World War 1 and 2. These wars began in the year 1914 and last till 1919 and 1939 to 1945 respectively. Aftermath of the world wars was traumatic for everyone. The horror of the world war 1 was evident on the face of every citizen. Feeling of uncertainty was spread and no one knew where the world was heading into.

**Key points to remember about modern period**

Advancement of the social science and natural science in the later half of the 19th century and early decades of the 20th century. Gains in material wealth with the rapid development and industrialization. The difference between aristocrats and clergy increased more.

English literature of the modern age started with the initiation of the 20th century. The prominent feature of the literature during the modern age was that it opposed the general attitude towards life as shown in Victorian literature.

People started to regard victorian age as a hypocritical age, having superficial and mean ideals. Hypocrisy of victorian period generated a rebellious attitude in the writers of modern literature. Things that were considered as beautiful and honourable during victorian age was considered as ugly by the writers of modern period. Sense of questioning was absent in the mind of the people from the victorian age.

During Victorian times, people adhere to the voice of the people who were in power, they accepted the rules made the church. People started to accept the law without questioning them. But the generation came after were having critical thinking, they raise questions against the decisions produced by supreme authorities. Writers of modern age refuted the ideas and beliefs of previous era.

Modern age helped in replacing the simple belief of the victorians into modern man’s desire to probe. George Bernard Shaw attacked the old superstitious religious beliefs as well as the superstitions of science. He was the one who pioneered the interrogative habits in the mid of modern people. Shaw openly challenged the voice of those who were ruling the country, and religion authority. He provoked the people to come up with questions over the morality and religion.

**Transition from the Victorian period to the Modern Period**

**Changes in the literature**

There were various changes took place in the field of literature also during the modern period. The imaginative writing, verses, structure of the verses of Victorian period became obsolete. Writers work started losing the magic they used to have in previous age. Victorian writers were becoming rancid and their works were failing to evoke the spirit of the readers. Art has to be renewed in order to revitalize the readers. But victorian art works were lacking the surprising elements and freshness in the content.

**Declination of sentiments and values**

Modern world people were more into independence, they don’t want to bind by the parental authority,whereas Victorians believed in maintaining the home life, they consider themselves a family person more. Moreover, the feeling of love was getting limited to sex in modern times, love had become less of a romance and more like a greed. Such things portray the decline in the values, emotions and feelings in the people of modern period. Literary work also portray the similar life style. If writers try to write on the themes of victorian age then it would be no longer a striking piece of literature. Therefore, you  will find the literature of modern period having less zeal for love, natural beauty and the sentiments. Modern writers come up with fresh point of view suiting the conventional audience.

**Age of machinery**

There is no doubt that machinery has dominated the modern people’s life. Modern period is also known as the age of machinery. People had become too materialistic brought by the machinery. There is no doubt that the advent of machinery made life comfortable for modern man. Living become quite easy and production of goods were also accelerated. But they downward side of mechanical life was that man has mechanical like a clock, using all his energy not according to his/her own will rather according to the time scheme. Such atmosphere of modern life brought great distress among the people.

If you are a literature student and struggling with the same concepts you can get [**Assignment Help Australia**](https://www.allassignmenthelp.com/au/) and clear all your doubts.

**Literature of the Modern period**

**Literary trends**

The trend of modernism emerged after the end of the First World War. They includes:

-Stream of consciousness

-Surrealism

-Cubism

-Dadaism

-Futurism

-Expressionism

-Imagism

-Symbolism

a) Modern English poetry

Modern English Poetry is a sort of revolution against the traditional thoughts and types of the Victorian era poetry.

b) Modern English novels

They rein the literature in the initial three decades of the twentieth century, these years are known as the golden period of modernist novel.

c) The development of 20th century English drama

George Bernard Shaw and Oscar Wilde were the most known, praised and celebrated drama writers of the nineteenth century. They were highly popular in the last decade of the century. One can say that they marked the beginning of the modern drama. However, these two eminent writers never brought many variations or innovations in the writing techniques and types.

**2. Modern period : Artistic features**

a) Modernism

Modernism is a quite unique and complex movement in almost all the creative areas. It began at the end of the 19th century. During this period literature got the inception of greatest renaissance of 20th century. When the first World War ended, a number of literary trends of the modern period such as dadaism, stream of consciousness, futurism, cubism, expressionism and imagism emerged.

b) Basic characters of modernism:

The foundation of modernism lies in the theory of psycho-analysis and irrational philosophy. One of the main characteristics of modern period is “the dehumanization of art”. Some other crucial themes of modernism involves alienated, ill and distorted relation between man and man, man and his own self, man and society and most importantly between man and nature.

**The pillars of modernism**

* David Herbert Lawrence (1885-1930) – Sons and Lovers
* James Joyce (1882- 1941) Ulysses
* Thomas Stearns Eliot (1888- 1965) Murder in the Cathedral
* George Bernard Shaw (1856- 1950) Mrs. Warrant’ Profession
* William Butler Yeats (1865- 1939) The Land of Heart’s Desire
* John Galaworthy (1867- 1933) The Man of Property

These writers are considered one of the big players of modernist literature. You can get familiar with major elements of modernism by reading their literary works. In case you require some guidance with any literary device, technique or work you can move to [**online assignment help**](https://www.allassignmenthelp.com/).

Let’s know more about the life, thoughts and works of some major representatives of this age:

**D. H. Lawrence**

David Herber Lawrence was born in 1885 at a mining village which lies in Nottinghamshire. He was reared by parents who belonged to different classes and saw a silent conflict of views. His father was a man who acquired little education and led his life as a coal-miner. On the other hand, his mother was educated and had experience of working as a teacher. She used to think that she her marriage is beneath her and had a strong desire to provide education to her sons so they can stay away from the tough life of the coal miners.

His personal life had a great impact on this literary works. It can be read in his masterpiece “Sons and Lovers” as well. In that he has portrayed the consistent conflict between strong willed, up-climbing mother and coarse, energetic, earthy but often drunken father. “Sons and Lovers” is  considered as an autobiographical novel.

***His masterpieces include:***

* Lady Chatterley’s Lover
* The Rainbow
* Woman in Love

Theme in the novels of Lawrence

In his opinion, the bourgeois industrialization or civilization, which made its realization at the cost of ravishing the land, started the catastrophic uprooting of man from nature and caused the distortion of personality, the corruption of the will, and the dominance of sterile intellect over the authentic inward passions of man.

In most of his writings, D.H. Lawrence showcased a stern reaction against the then mechanical civilization.

According to him, the materialistic civilization or industrialization became the cause of detachment between man and nature. His opinion suggested that these factors at the cost of ravishing lives and land.

He considered the materialism as the prime cause of corruption of the will, dominance of sterile intellect and defeat of real inward passion of humans and distortion of personality.

Lawrence thought that the mechanism in making humans in animated matter, this agonized view regarding the dehumanizing impact of robotic civilization on the sensitivity of human nature always haunted the writing of Lawrence.

Brief Analysis of Lawrence’s masterpiece

Sons and Lovers – Introduction

Sons and Lovers is known as one of the best writings of Lawrence. It is more or less an autobiographical piece which is written in vivid episodes and straight-forward narrative. The novel follows a chronological sequence, where in the story begins with the marriage of Mr. and Mrs. Morel, parents of Paul. Mrs. Morel belongs to a well settled middle class family who is highly ambitious, Lawrence presents her as “a woman of character and refinement”. She is intelligent, strong-will woman and falls in love with an energetic and sensuous coal miner named Walter Morel. In the course of her love she marries beneath her own class and enters into a chaotic life full of everyday struggles.

Sons and lovers – Theme

D. H. Lawrence is remembered as one of the first writers who brought the theme of psychology into literature. Through his works he presented a number of psychological themes in a precise manner. Lawrence had an opinion that life impulse or sexual impulse is the safest way to psychological development of human beings. For him human sexuality had some different notions, he considered him as a symbol of force of life. He showcases the slight and deep psychological experience of individuals and relationships. Through Sons and Lovers he began a new territory of novels.

Analysis of two main characters of Sons and Lovers

Mrs. Gertrude Morel

She is the first major character and protagonist in the story. She marries beneath her class in her fascination with energetic Walter Morel, a coal miner. By the passage of time she comes one after another struggle on both financial and emotional aspects in her marriage. Her unhappiness with her marriage creates detachment with her husband and she devotes her life to their 4 kids.

Paul Morel

After Gertrude Morel her son Paul Morel takes over the role of main protagonist from the second half of the novel. He emerges as a main character after his elder brother William dies. William Morel was the first child of Mrs. Morel and her favourite among all children. When he dies, it is Paul who becomes her favourite. Throughout the novel he struggles to bring a balance between his love for Mrs. Morel and other relationships with women.

**James Joyce**

James Joyce was born in Dublin in 1882. He belonged to a Catholic family and got his education from Catholic schools. During his studies he went through a phase of religious zest, however, he rejected the Catholic Church. He was influenced was Ibsen and inspired by his views, Joyce took literary mission as a career. He was sternly against the bigotry of Phillistines in Dublin.

***His most remarkable works include:***

* A Portrait of Artist as a Young Man
* Dubliners
* Theme in the works of Joyce
* Ulysses

Joyce brought a number of changes in the conventional forms of fiction by generating a unique medium of art. He portrayed the crisis and chaos of consciousness in his contemporary world.

He brought light to the stream of consciousness as a genre in the modern period literature.

Brief analysis of Joyce’ writing

Ulysses

It gives insight to a man’s life in a day (16 June, 1904). The main characters of Ulysses are: An Irish Jew, his wife, Leopold Bloom, Stephen Dedalus and Marion Tweedy Bloom. The novel’s division is into eighteen chapters resembling 18 hours of the day.

**Conclusion**

To conclude everything in short I would say there are many more things which you should know about the Modern period and literature development of this era. The more you will study the works of this modernist literature the more you will admire it. There are some literary theories or concepts which you may not understand easily. In such cases you can get[**instant assignment help**](https://www.allassignmenthelp.com/instant-assignment-help.html) and learn things in an easier way.



[Susan White](https://www.allassignmenthelp.com/blog/author/susanwhite/)

Hi, I am Susan White. I am a Senior Marketing Executive and Content Editor at AllAssignmentHelp.com. For the past few years I have been working with this company. I hope you liked the post above from one of our team members. If you want to share any improvements or want some more on this blog, please share your request on our email [enquiry@allassignmenthelp.com.](mailto:enquiry@allassignmenthelp.com)

I have been in this academic industry for a very long time. You can know more about me from [my LinkedIn profile](https://www.linkedin.com/in/susan-white/). Below are some of my achievements that I prize:

– Successfully published five academic research papers in the marketing field  
– Assisted hundreds of students get best grades in their courses  
– Regularly helping my colleagues do their best at their job  
– Toured several places around the world in the past five years!  
– A proud mother of a kid!

Thank you again for reading this article. I look forward to your feedback and continued support.