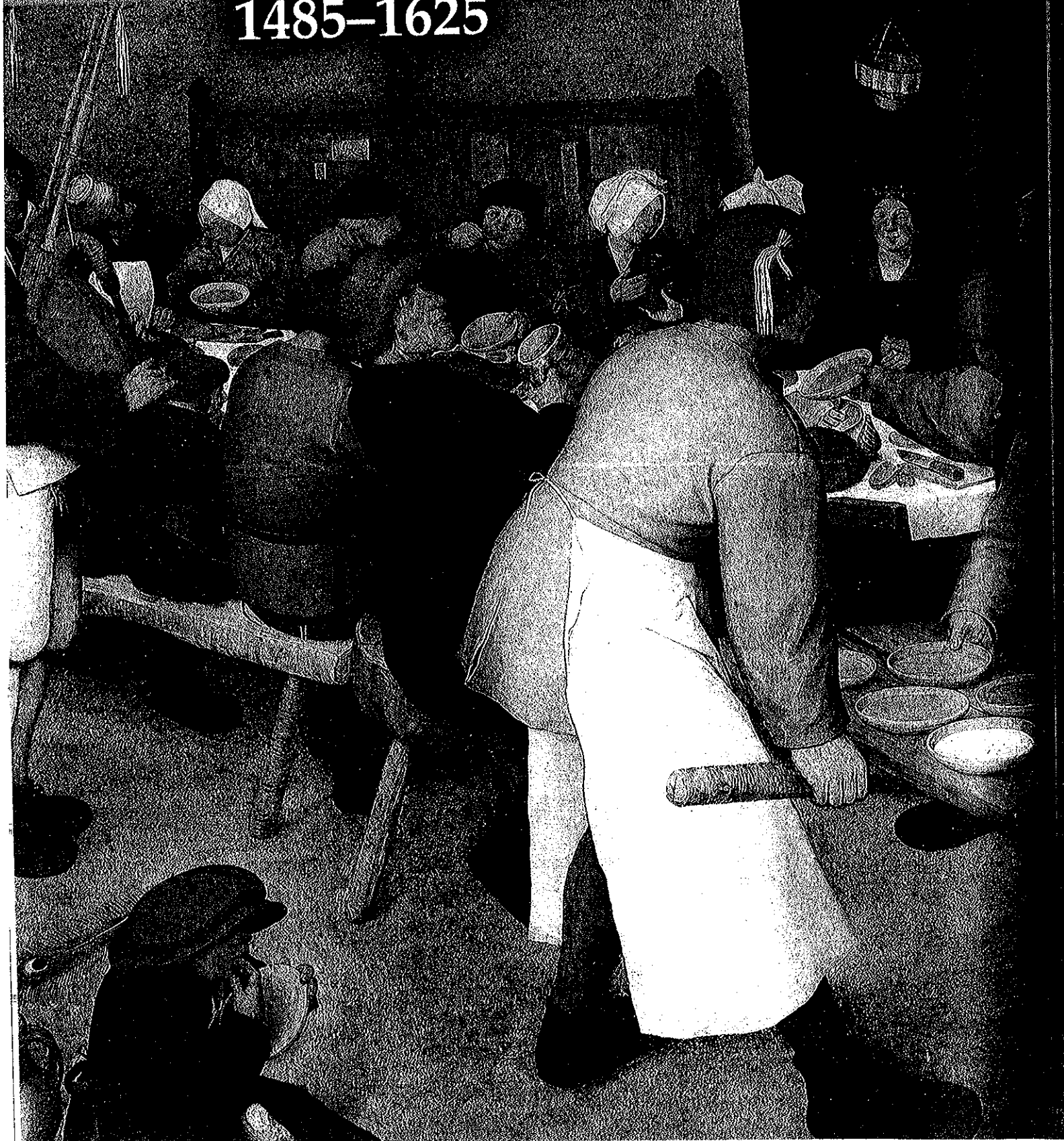


Unit
2

Celebrating Humanity

1485–1625





The English Renaissance Period

“What a piece of work
is a man! how noble
in reason! how infinite in
faculties! in form and
moving how express and
admirable! in action how
like an angel!”

—William Shakespeare,
from *Hamlet*

◀ This painting by
Pieter Brueghel
illustrates the
wedding celebration
of a peasant in 1500.

Setting the Scene

The literature of Unit 2 emerges from one of the most exciting and dynamic times in British history: the English Renaissance. In the essay below, scholar Frank Kermode paints a vivid picture of daily life in London during the reigns of Queen Elizabeth and James I. Later, in the unit introduction and in the literature, you will discover some of the authors and works that revolutionized writing in Britain.



From the Scholar's Desk Frank Kermode Talks About the Time Period

Introducing Frank Kermode (b. 1919) Kermode is a literary critic whose in-depth analyses range from the Bible to Shakespeare to D. H. Lawrence. He is a former professor of Modern English at University College, London, and was knighted by Queen Elizabeth in 1991.



Frank Kermode

Life in Elizabethan and Jacobean England

London expanded greatly during the reign of Queen Elizabeth I, becoming one of the largest and wealthiest European capitals. Essentially a medieval city, its southern boundary was the River Thames, which was also its principal thoroughfare. To the north was the old Roman wall, but the city was spreading beyond it. Upstream was Westminster, the historic seat of the court and the national government. And across the river was Southwark, outside the jurisdiction of the City of London and therefore the favored site for enterprises, including theaters, deplored by the virtually autonomous and puritanical City government.

The population was swollen by country people, escaping the restrictions of rural life and famine, and by immigrants from Europe. The narrow, traffic-crowded streets were lined by shops and workshops, by civic mansions and rich halls of the trade guilds, and by the Inns of Court, haunts of lawyers and young gentlemen continuing their studies after leaving Oxford or Cambridge. The class system was strict—clothes were appropriate to rank, whether gentleman, citizen, craftsman, or laborer.

The Challenges of Urban Life London was not clean or healthy. Sanitation was crude—the Thames was a beautiful sewer. Deadly diseases—plague, malaria, smallpox—ensured a high mortality rate. Cheats,

▼ Critical Viewing

Which details in this painting support Kermode's description of London? [Analyze]





tricksters, and thieves abounded. Men carried weapons—swords or pistols—in the street. Meanwhile, as the fields and woods were built over, access to country air grew more difficult.

Inflation was unchecked but money flowed freely. Among the expensive luxuries of the day were ostentatious clothes and tobacco, a recent import from the New World. London was perpetual bustle, noise and display. Imagine how a young man from the provinces, like Shakespeare, might react to it. Shakespeare's Stratford, though a sturdy community with its own guilds and its good grammar school, hardly offered adequate preparation for London, among other things a great port and the gateway to the larger world. The splendor of the river and the mansions lining its bank won the keen admiration of foreign visitors, who compared its magnificence with that of Paris and other great European cities.

From Stratford to London In Shakespeare's day, the journey from Stratford to London took four days on foot, two on a horse. Shakespeare, new to London, probably took time to settle down. His London was the area around the old St. Paul's cathedral. The theaters were across the river in wicked Southwark. Westminster, site of Whitehall Palace, was a couple of miles to the west. There, in ancient halls, the great affairs of state were decided; there the queen contended with the pope and her other foreign and domestic enemies. Later, James catered to his favorites and dreamed of establishing absolute monarchy and universal peace. However, their majesties both liked plays, so there was hope for an aspiring playwright. There was the prospect of pleasure and success, though there was also risk. Perhaps that's why Shakespeare left his family in Stratford: to take his place in the London theater—and eventually, literary immortality.

Go Online Author Link

For: A video clip of
Frank Kermode
Visit: www.PHSchool.com
Web Code: ese-8201

For: More about
Frank Kermode
Visit: www.PHSchool.com
Web Code: ese-9201

Reading the Unit Introduction

Reading for Information and Insight Use the following terms and questions to guide your reading of the unit introduction on pages 228–235.

Names and Terms to Know

Renaissance
Martin Luther
Wars of the Roses
Henry VIII
Elizabeth I
James I
Mary Stuart
Puritans
Elizabethan Age

Focus Questions As you read this introduction, use what you learn to answer these questions:

- What are the characteristics of the spirit of the Renaissance?
- In what ways did religion make an impact on English life in the fifteenth century?
- In what way does literature provide a forum for criticisms of social institutions during this period?

British and World Events

1485

1520

1550

BRITISH EVENTS
WORLD EVENTS

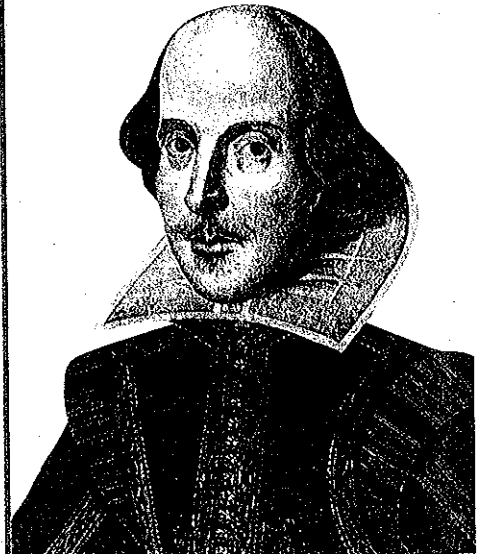
- 1485 Henry VII becomes the first Tudor king.
- c. 1500 *Everyman* first performed.
- 1512 First masque performed.
- 1516 **Thomas More** publishes *Utopia*.



- 1534 Henry VIII issues Act of Supremacy. ▲
- 1534 Church of England established.
- 1535 **Thomas More** executed. ◀
- 1541 John Knox leads Calvinist reformation in Scotland.
- 1547 Henry VIII dies.
- 1549 *The Book of Common Prayer* issued.



- 1558 **Elizabeth I** becomes queen. ▶
- 1560 Thomas Tallis publishes English cathedral music.
- 1563 More than 20,000 Londoners die in plague.
- 1564 **William Shakespeare** born. ▼



- 1492 Columbus lands in Western Hemisphere.
- 1497 Africa: Vasco da Gama rounds Cape of Good Hope.
- 1503 Italy: Leonardo da Vinci paints *Mona Lisa*.
- 1509 Italy: Michelangelo paints ceiling of Sistine Chapel.
- 1513 North America: Ponce de León explores Florida.
- 1518 Africa: Algiers and Tunisia founded.

- 1521 Italy: Pope Leo X excommunicates Martin Luther.
- 1532 Peru: Pizarro conquers Incas.
- 1532 France: Rabelais publishes *Gargantua and Pantagruel*, Book 1.
- 1534 Spain: St. Ignatius Loyola founds Jesuit brotherhood.
- 1535 Spain: King Charles I captures Tunis.
- 1540 Poland: Copernicus completes treatise on astronomy.

- 1554 Italy: Cellini completes bronze statue of Perseus.
- 1556 India: Akbar the Great comes to power.
- 1566 Belgium: Bruegel paints *The Wedding Dance*.
- 1567 South America: 2 million Indians die of typhoid.
- 1567 Brazil: Rio de Janeiro founded by Portuguese.

1575 1600 1610 1625



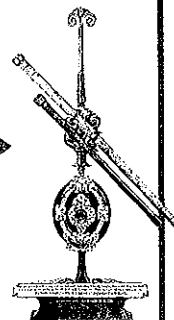
- 1580 Francis Drake returns from circumnavigating the globe.
- c. 1582 **Sir Philip Sidney** writes *Astrophel and Stella*.
- 1588 English navy defeats Spanish Armada. ▲
- 1590 **Edmund Spenser** publishes *The Faerie Queene*, Part I.
- 1594 **Shakespeare** writes *Romeo and Juliet*.
- 1599 Globe theater opens.

- 1580 France: Montaigne's *Essays* published.
- 1582 Italy: Pope Gregory XIII introduces new calendar. ▼
- 1595 South America: Sir Walter Raleigh explores Orinoco River.

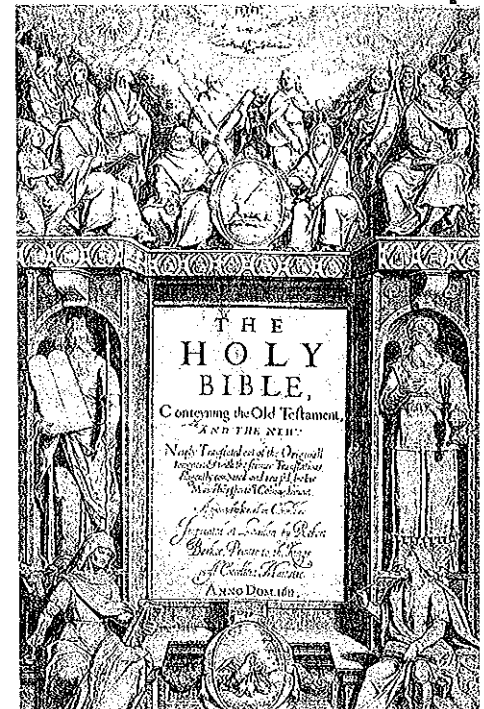


- 1600 East India Company founded.
- 1603 **Elizabeth I** dies; James I becomes king.
- 1606 Guy Fawkes executed for Gunpowder Plot.
- 1606 Royal debt amounts to more than £600,000.
- 1609 *The Faerie Queene* by **Edmund Spenser** is published in its entirety.

- 1605 Spain: Cervantes publishes Part I of *Don Quixote*.
- 1607 North America: British colony established at Jamestown.
- 1608 North America: French colony of Quebec established.
- 1609 Italy: Galileo builds first telescope. ▶



- 1611 King James Bible published. ▼
- 1620 Francis Bacon publishes *Novum Organum*.
- 1623 First patent laws passed.
- 1625 James I dies.



- 1618 Germany: Kepler proposes laws of planetary motion.
- 1618 Europe: Beginning of the Thirty Years' War, a series of European conflicts fought for various reasons.
- 1620 North America: Pilgrims land at Plymouth Rock.
- 1620 China: Death of the T'ai-Ch'ang emperor after a one-month reign sparks new conflicts.

Historical Background

The Renaissance, one of the most exciting periods in history, was both a worldly and a religious age. It blossomed first in the Italian city-states (1350–1550), where commerce and a wealthy middle class supported learning and the arts. Slowly, Renaissance ideas spread northward, giving rise to the English Renaissance (1485–1625). During the Renaissance, scholars reacted against what they saw as the “dark ages” of medieval Europe, and they revived the learning of ancient Greece and Rome. They wanted to bring about a rebirth of civilization.

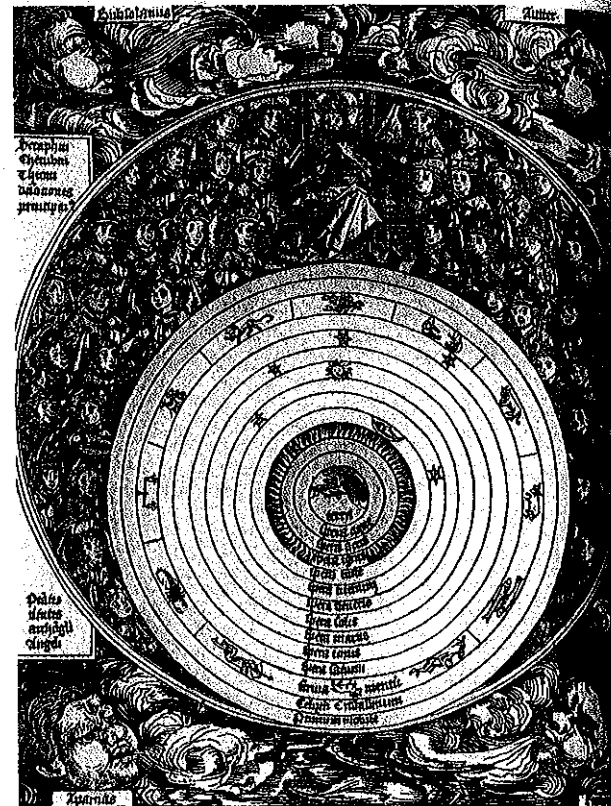
The Age of Exploration The Renaissance thirst for knowledge prompted a great burst of exploration by sea. Navigators ventured far and wide, aided by the development of the compass and by advances in astronomy, which freed them from the need to cling to the shores of the Atlantic. Their explorations reached a high point with Columbus’s arrival in the Western Hemisphere in 1492.

England’s participation in the Age of Exploration began in 1497, when the Italian-born explorer John Cabot, sailing in the service of an English company, reached Newfoundland (an island off the east coast of what is now Canada) and perhaps also the mainland. Cabot thus laid the basis for future English claims in North America.

Religion Along with the Renaissance spirit, a growing sense of nationalism led many Europeans to question the authority of the Roman Catholic Church. Many people had grievances against the Church. Some felt that Church officials were corrupt; others questioned Church teachings and hierarchy.

The edition of the New Testament by the great Dutch scholar Desiderius Erasmus (1466–1536) raised serious questions about standard interpretations of the Bible. Because of his friendship with such English writers as Thomas More (1478–1535), Erasmus focused attention on issues of morality and religion that continued to be central concerns of the English Renaissance.

Although Erasmus himself remained a Roman Catholic, he helped pave the way for a split in the Church that began in 1517, when a German monk named Martin Luther (1483–1546) nailed a list of dissenting beliefs to the door of a German church. Although this was not his intent, Luther’s protest resulted in the division of the Church and a new Christian denomination that became known as Lutheranism. The process that Luther started has come to be called the Protestant Reformation.



▲ Critical Viewing

Ptolemy was a second century A.D. astronomer and mathematician.

Renaissance thinkers believed in his Earth-centered model of the universe, shown above. Compare and contrast this view of the universe with our view of the universe today.

[Compare and Contrast]

The Tudors The ending of the Wars of the Roses and the founding of the Tudor dynasty in 1485 opened a new era in English life. Monarchs assured stability by increasing their own power and undercutting the strength of the nobles. At the same time, they dramatically changed England's religious practices and helped transform the country from a small island nation into one of the world's great powers.

The first Tudor monarch, Henry VII, inherited an England that had been depleted and exhausted by years of civil war. By the time he died in 1509, he had rebuilt the nation's treasury and established law and order. In doing so, he restored the prestige of the monarchy and set the stage for his successors.

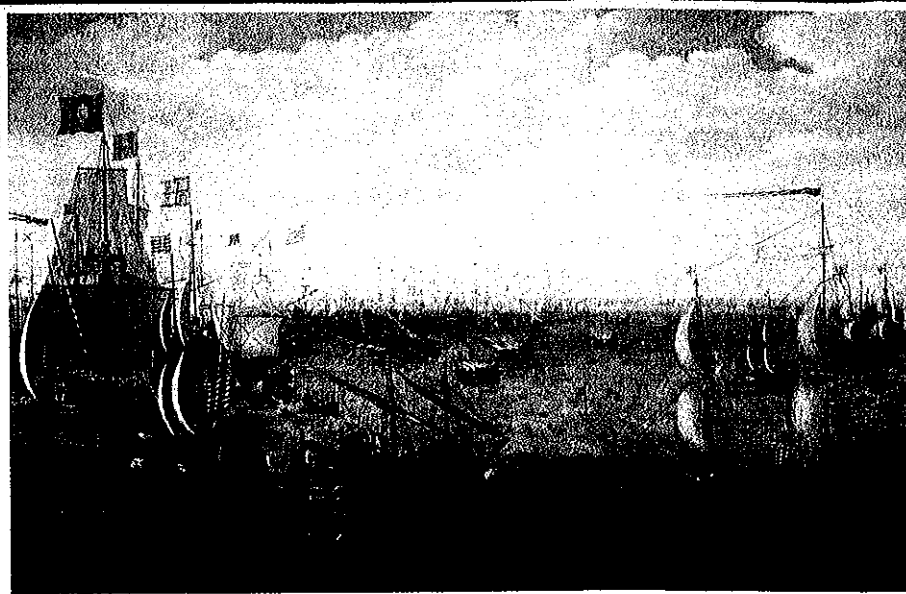
Henry VII was succeeded by his handsome and athletic son, Henry VIII. Like his father, Henry VIII was a practicing Catholic. He even wrote a book against Martin Luther, for which a grateful Pope granted him the title "Defender of the Faith."

Henry VIII's good relationship with the Pope did not last, however. Because his marriage to Catherine of Aragon had not produced a son, Henry tried to obtain an annulment from the Pope so that he could marry Anne Boleyn. When the Pope refused, Henry remarried anyway. This defiance of papal authority led to an open break with the Roman Catholic Church. Henry seized the Catholic Church's English property and dissolved the powerful monasteries. He even had his former friend and leading advisor, Thomas More, executed because More had refused to renounce his Catholic faith.

Henry married six times. His first two marriages produced two daughters, Mary and Elizabeth. His third wife, Jane Seymour, bore a son, Edward, who was still a child when Henry died in 1547.

Religious Turmoil Henry VIII's son became King Edward VI at the age of nine and died at the age of fifteen. During his brief reign, a series of parliamentary acts dramatically changed the nation's religious practices. English replaced Latin in church ritual, and the Anglican prayer book, the Book of Common Prayer, became required in public worship. By the time of Edward's death in 1553, England was well on its way to becoming a Protestant nation.

Roman Catholicism made a turbulent comeback, however, when Edward's half sister Mary took the throne. Mary I was a Catholic, and she restored Roman practices to the Church of England. She also restored the authority of the Pope over the English Church. Ordering the execution of about 300 Protestants, Queen Mary earned the nickname "Bloody Mary" and strengthened anti-Catholic sentiment in England.



▲ Critical Viewing

The English navy gained supremacy on the sea after defeating the Spanish Armada in 1588. Examine this painting of the battle between the two navies, and infer the types of war tactics used by the English that may have contributed to their success. [Infer]

Elizabeth I When Mary I died after a five-year reign, her half sister, Elizabeth, came to the throne. Strong and clever, Elizabeth I was probably England's ablest monarch since William the Conqueror. She had received a Renaissance education and had read widely in the Greek and Latin classics. Becoming a great patron of the arts, she gathered around her the best writers of her day.

Elizabeth also put an end to the religious turmoil that had existed during Mary I's reign. She reestablished the monarch's supremacy over the Church of England and restored the Book of Common Prayer. Overall, she instituted a policy of religious compromise, enforcing reforms that she felt both moderate Catholics and Protestants could accept.

Elizabeth's one outstanding problem was her Catholic cousin Mary Stuart, queen of Scotland by birth and next in line for the throne of England. Because Catholics did not recognize Henry VIII's marriage to Elizabeth's mother, Anne Boleyn, they considered Mary Stuart the queen of England. Imprisoned by Elizabeth for eighteen years, Mary instigated numerous Catholic plots against her. Following the recommendations of her advisors, Elizabeth stepped up punishment of the Catholics but let her royal cousin live. Finally, Parliament insisted on Mary's execution. She was beheaded in 1587, a Catholic martyr.



The British Tradition

Close-Up on Society

High Fashion in the Elizabethan Age

Noblewomen looked like dolls on display, tightly laced into dresses that resembled giant bells. Noblemen were arrayed like showy peacocks in close-fitting jackets and wide collars that seemed to serve up their heads on plates of lace. High fashion was indeed a statement during Elizabeth's reign. As shown in the accompanying pictures—one of Queen Elizabeth and one of Sir Walter Raleigh—clothing was elaborate and theatrical in an age that loved the drama and dramatized itself.

Two devices that helped create these effects were the ruff and the farthingale, both of which came from the Spanish court. Even after the English navy defeated the Spanish Armada in 1588, Spanish fashions held sway among the English nobility. The ruff was a pleated, starched collar worn by both sexes. It varied in size, but as you can see from the picture of Raleigh, above, it could expand to the size of a very large platter. The farthingale was a linen underskirt stretched over a thick iron wire that supported a skirt or dress and gave it a bell shape.

Toward the end of Elizabeth's reign, fashions became a little less showy. Men began to wear a falling collar more like that of today, and a simpler doublet, or close-fitting jacket. Women changed their bell-shaped gowns for drum-shaped ones, and in the early seventeenth century, the farthingale itself was replaced by padding.

▲ Critical Viewing

These portraits show Queen Elizabeth and Sir Walter Raleigh dressed in elaborate fashions. Speculate about the types of lives led by the people who could afford these clothes. [Speculate]

Stuarts and Puritans The English Renaissance continued after Elizabeth died in 1603, although a new dynasty—the Stuarts—came to the throne of England. Determined to avoid a dispute over the throne and a return of civil strife, Elizabeth had named King James VI of Scotland as her successor, making him James I of England. James’s claim to the throne of England rested on his descent from King Henry VII of England through his mother, Mary Stuart, Elizabeth’s old antagonist. Unlike Mary, however, James was a Protestant.

The years of James I’s reign are sometimes described as the Jacobean Era, from *Jacobus*, the Latin word for James. Like his predecessor, James I was a strong supporter of the arts. He also took measures to expand England’s position as a world power, sponsoring the establishment of its first successful American colony—Jamestown, Virginia.

During his reign, however, James and Parliament struggled for power, a conflict that would later erupt into war. Guided by the idea of the “divine right of kings,” James I often treated Parliament with contempt, and they quarreled over taxes and foreign wars. James I also persecuted the Puritans, who were strongly represented in the House of Commons. Prompted by the king’s religious intolerance, a group of Puritans migrated to America and established the Plymouth Colony in 1620.

The British Tradition

Art in the Historical Context

Hans Holbein the Younger, Portraitist of the English Court

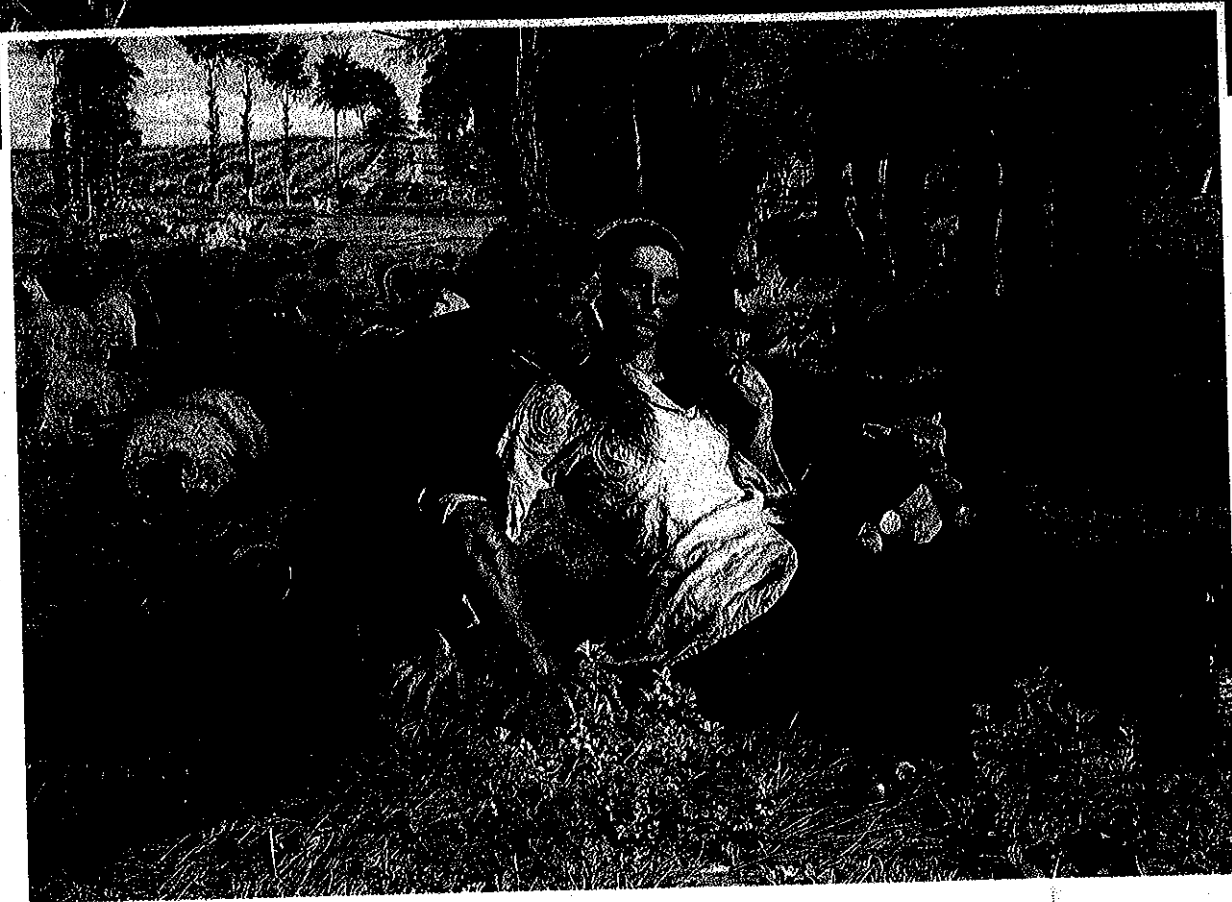
During the English Renaissance, the visual arts did not flourish as they had in Italy and other European countries. Perhaps that is why the greatest English painter of this period was a German, Hans Holbein the Younger (1497–1543). Born in south Germany, Holbein traveled to Switzerland and eventually settled in England.

Working at the English court, Holbein painted many of its most prominent figures, including Sir Thomas More. In this portrait, Holbein focuses on the most powerful man in early sixteenth-century England, King Henry VIII.

Holbein’s portrait of King Henry VIII is not much larger than 2½ feet by two feet, but some scholars have argued that it makes Henry seem very large indeed.

► **Critical Viewing** Considering details such as body language, costume, facial expression, position, and pose, support or refute this analysis of the painting by the art critic H. W. Janson: “. . . the [frontal view] and physical bulk of Henry VIII create an overpowering sensation of the king’s ruthless commanding presence.” [Draw Conclusions]





The Hireling Shepherd, William Holman Hunt © Manchester City Art Galleries

Literature of the Period

The Elizabethan Age produced an explosion of cultural energy. English architects designed and constructed beautiful mansions. Composers turned out new hymns to fit the Anglican service and popularized the English madrigal, a love song performed without musical accompaniment, often by several harmonizing voices. Painters and sculptors were busy, too. Although the Renaissance masters generally were not English, some—like the German artist Hans Holbein the Younger (1497–1543), court painter to Henry VIII—did move to England.

Like painting and sculpture, literature expressed the spirit of the Renaissance. Narratives, poetry, dramas, and comedies reflected the ideas of the times. They also provided a forum for subtle and satirical criticisms of social institutions such as the monarchy and the Church.

Elizabethan Poetry During the reign of Elizabeth I, English literature came of age. The most significant literary developments took place in the area of poetry. Favoring lyric poetry, rather than the narrative poems enjoyed by their medieval predecessors, the Elizabethan poets perfected the sonnet and began experimenting with other poetic forms.

The Sonnet: Sidney, Spenser, and Shakespeare One of the most popular literary forms during the Elizabethan Age was the sonnet cycle, a series of sonnets that fit loosely together to form a story. A sonnet is a fourteen-line poem which in English is usually in iambic pentameter and whose rhyme scheme varies. The first of the great Elizabethan sonnet cycles was *Astrophel*

▲ Critical Viewing

This picture dates from the nineteenth century, but it portrays the type of pastoral scene that appealed to many Elizabethan poets. Why do you think the lives of shepherds and shepherdesses like these interested court poets?

[Infer]

and *Stella* by Sir Philip Sidney. Sidney also helped adapt classical verse forms to the English language.

Another major Elizabethan poet was Edmund Spenser, who wrote intricate verse filled with rich imagery. His sonnet cycle *Amoretti* is unique in that it was addressed to his wife.

The brilliant lyric poet William Shakespeare, also the era's greatest dramatist, brought the Elizabethan sonnet to new heights. Shakespeare changed the pattern and rhyme scheme of the Petrarchan, or Italian, sonnet, employing a form now known as the English, or Shakespearean, sonnet. The Petrarchan sonnet is divided into an octave, with a rhyme scheme *abbaabba*, and a sestet, with a rhyme scheme *cdecde, cdcdcd*, or a similar pattern, avoiding a closing couplet. The Shakespearean sonnet is divided into four quatrains and a closing couplet, with a rhyme scheme *abab cdcd efef gg*.

Pastoral Poetry: Marlowe and Raleigh Christopher Marlowe (1564–1593) was also a noted playwright and a gifted lyric poet. Marlowe helped popularize pastoral verse, which idealizes the rustic simplicity of rural life, in such poems as "The Passionate Shepherd to His Love."

Marlowe's poem inspired Sir Walter Raleigh (1552?–1618) to write a famous response, "The Nymph's Reply to the Shepherd." Poet, historian, courtier, soldier, and explorer, Raleigh was a typical Renaissance man whose adventurous life mirrored the restless spirit of his day.

Elizabethan Drama During the Elizabethan Age, playwrights turned away from religious subjects and began writing more complex and sophisticated plays. Drawing upon the classical models of ancient Greece and Rome, they reintroduced tragedies and dramas.

Christopher Marlowe as Playwright Besides being a leading poet, Christopher Marlowe became the first major Elizabethan dramatist in the 1580s, writing such plays as *Tamburlaine the Great* and *The Tragical History of Doctor Faustus*. Had Marlowe lived past the age of thirty, he might well have rivaled Shakespeare as England's greatest playwright.

William Shakespeare as Playwright Shakespeare began his involvement with the theater as an actor. By 1592, he was a popular playwright, whose works were performed even at Elizabeth I's court.

After the Globe theater was built in 1599, many of Shakespeare's plays were performed there. Shakespeare wrote thirty-seven plays,

▼ Critical Viewing

What could readers learn about Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* from this illustration? [Infer]



among them many of the greatest dramas of all time. He wrote nine tragedies, including *Romeo and Juliet*, *Hamlet*, and *Macbeth*; several comedies, including *The Merchant of Venice* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*; ten histories (plays based on historical characters), including *Richard II*, *Richard III*, and *Henry V*; and a number of plays often classified as "tragic comedies" or "romances," such as *The Tempest*.

Filled with powerful and beautiful language, his works display his deep understanding of human nature. Because of their eloquent language and depth, Shakespeare's plays have retained their popularity through the centuries. Fellow poet and playwright Ben Jonson said of Shakespeare, "He was not of an age, but for all time."

Elizabethan and Jacobean Prose Prose took a back seat to poetry and drama during the English Renaissance. Scholars still preferred to write in Latin, and their English prose had a Latin flavor. Because they used long words and ornate sentences, their work is often difficult to read today.

The British Tradition

A Writer's Voice

William Shakespeare's Farewell in *The Tempest*

The Tempest, which may have been Shakespeare's last play, is often regarded as his farewell to the theater. One speech, given by a character named Prospero, seems to embody this farewell. Prospero has just staged an elaborate, magical play-within-a-play in which "spirits" are the actors, but he quickly ends it when he recalls what he still must do to thwart his enemies.

In his speech, the references to the vanishing scenery of the play could also refer to a vanishing world: "The cloud-capped towers, the gorgeous palaces, / The solemn temples, the great globe itself. . . ." This double reference to reality and play is supported by his pun on the word *globe*, which could refer to the Earth or to the Globe theater, where so many of Shakespeare's dramas were staged. In good Elizabethan fashion, Shakespeare equates life with theater, at the same time suggesting the illusory quality of life.

from *The Tempest*, Act IV, Scene i

- | | |
|--|---|
| <p>Our revels^o now are ended. These our actors,
As I foretold you, were all spirits and—
Are melted into air, into thin air;
And, like the baseless fabric^o of this vision,</p> | <p>^oEntertainments</p> |
| <p>5 The cloud-capped towers, the gorgeous places,
The solemn temples, the great globe itself,
Yea, all which it inherit,^o shall dissolve,
And, like this insubstantial pageant faded,
Leave not a rack^o behind. We are such stuff</p> | <p>^oStructure without foundation</p> <p>^oAll who inhabit it</p> |
| <p>10 As dreams are made on, and our little life
Is rounded with a sleep. . . .</p> | <p>^oA drifting cloud</p> |



The Prose of Sidney, Nashe, and Raleigh Several Elizabethan poets also contributed major works of prose. Sir Philip Sidney's *Defence of Poesie* (about 1582) is one of the earliest works of English literary criticism. Thomas Nashe's *The Unfortunate Traveler* (1594), a fictional tale, was a forerunner of the novel. *History of the World*, another important work of prose, was written by Sir Walter Raleigh during his imprisonment in the Tower of London.

Sir Francis Bacon Perhaps the leading prose writer of the English Renaissance was Sir Francis Bacon, a high government official under James I. "I have taken all knowledge to be my province," Bacon wrote, and his literary output reflects his scholarship in many fields. *Novum Organum* (1620), his greatest work, made major contributions to natural science and philosophy. Bacon is also known for his formal essays, short prose works focusing on single topics.

The King James Bible The most monumental prose achievement of the entire English Renaissance is undoubtedly the English translation of the Bible commissioned by King James on the advice of Protestant clergymen. Fifty-four scholars labored for seven years to bring this magnificent work to fruition. The King James Bible, or Authorized Version, is among the most widely quoted and influential works in the English language.

The Achievements of the Renaissance The English Renaissance moved England out of its medieval past and into the modern world. No writers since have surpassed the literary achievements of Shakespeare or the majestic language of the King James Bible. They provide the standard against which all English literature has been judged right down to the present time.

▲ Critical Viewing

Doctors could do little to stop epidemics of smallpox, measles, influenza, and yellow fever. Study this picture to speculate about the measures taken in epidemics: (a) Why has the door been padlocked? (b) Why is a fire burning before the house?

[Speculate]

The Changing English Language

"A Man of Fire-New Words"

BY RICHARD LEDERER

THE AGELESS BARD

Shakespeare's plays, which he wrote in London between approximately 1590 and 1613, have been in almost constant production since their creation. Because the playwright dealt with universal truths and conflicts in human nature, his tragedies, comedies, and history plays continue to draw audiences from all walks of life, just as they did in their own day. Time has proved the truth of what Shakespeare's contemporary, Ben Jonson, said of him: "He was not of an age but for all time."

WORD-MAKER SUPREME

William Shakespeare's words, as well as his works, were not just of an age, but for all time. He was, quite simply, the greatest word maker who ever lived—an often neglected aspect of his genius.

Of the 20,138 different words that Shakespeare employs in his plays, sonnets, and other poems, his is the first known use of more than 1,700 of them. The most verbally innovative of our authors, Shakespeare made up more than 8.5 percent of his written vocabulary. Reading his works is like witnessing the birth of language itself.

"I pitied thee, / Took pains to make thee speak," says Prospero to Caliban in *The Tempest*. "I endow'd thy purposes / With words that made them known." Shakespeare is our Prospero; he dressed our thoughts with words and set our tongue teeming with phrases.

Consider the following list of thirty representative words that, as far as we can tell, Shakespeare was the first to use in writing. So great is his influence on his native tongue that we find it hard to imagine a time when these words did not exist.

aerial	amazement	assassination	auspicious
baseless	bedroom	bump	castigate
countless	courtship	critic	dishearten
dislocate	dwindle	exposure	frugal
generous	gloomy	hurry	impartial
invulnerable	lapse	laughable	lonely
majestic	monumental	perusal	pious
sneak	useless		

The striking compound that Shakespeare fashioned to describe Don Adriano de Armando in *Love's Labour's Lost* is an important label for the playwright himself: "a man of fire-new words." No day goes by that we do not speak and hear, and read and write using his legacy.

Activity

Oscar Wilde once quipped, "Now we sit through Shakespeare in order to recognize the quotations." Unrivaled in his invention of words, William Shakespeare is unequaled as a phrase-maker.

Complete the following expressions, each of which first saw the light in one of his plays:

1. Neither a _____ or a _____ be
2. All the world's a _____
3. With bated _____
4. Break the _____
5. Come full _____
6. Eaten me out of house and _____
7. A foregone _____
8. Laugh yourselves into _____
9. Not _____ an inch
10. Too much of a good _____