British

Literature 2

From the Eighteenth Century to Victorian Prose

Fifth Edition

TheCenterforLearning

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Fifth Edition
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Contents

Introduction

The eighteenth century is sometimes referred to as the Age of Satire, and the writings often highlight reason, wit, and irony. Improvements in printing led to magazines and newspapers; literacy increasingly became the norm for ordinary people. This unit opens with four writers from the period. Jonathan Swift today is most famous for "A Modest Proposal" and for *Gulliver's Travels*, although he was also a poet. An Anglo-Irish minister, Swift was capable of biting satire that criticized both social customs and government. Alexander Pope was famous for wit, philosophy, and poetry. *The Rape of the Lock* is a mock epic that pokes fun at vanity. Daniel Defoe wrote a kind of journalistic fiction and was responsible for one of the most well-known stories ever written, *Robinson Crusoe*. Samuel Johnson, perhaps the most influential man of his period, created the first comprehensive dictionary of the English language.

With the turn to the nineteenth century came a literary revolution and the birth of English Romanticism, represented by giants in the history of poetry. Then the long reign of Queen Victoria (1837–1901) saw industrial development and empire-building and brought a plethora of writers of both poetry and prose, including fiction and nonfiction. This unit emphasizes the Victorians' prose writings; you can find lessons about the major Victorian poets in *British Literature 3*.

Writings from these centuries sometimes pose a serious challenge to today's students. Paragraphs can often be a great deal longer than those characteristic of modern writing; sentence structures can be quite convoluted; the vocabulary may seem difficult. You will want to point out that by the mid-nineteenth century, the Industrial Revolution was under way, but the pace of living was not nearly as frantic as ours is today.

These two centuries of British literature include so many great writers and writings that it is necessary—and often difficult—to decide what to include and what to omit. As you and your students continue your journey through the great writings of the English Isles, you will want to stress ways that eighteenth and nineteenth century writers continue to impact novelists, poets, and dramatists today. The Romantics' idealism and love for nature can exert a powerful appeal; on the other hand, reality has a way of intervening and often leads to less optimistic perspectives.

Teacher Notes

This unit deals with neoclassical writing, the Romantic movement initiated by William Wordsworth and Samuel Taylor Coleridge, and prose writers of the Victorian period. It does not attempt a comprehensive study, but rather focuses on significant writers and works and connects those works to students' own lives. Lessons also pay attention to connections between historical events and literary works. The table of contents provides a general overview of lesson content.

The lessons address standards basic to language arts instruction at all levels. Students reach general conclusions and provide textual support. They analyze structure, themes, and figurative language. They make use of Internet sources to find information, and they collaborate in group presentations. All of the lessons include writing activities, some very brief, others extensive.

If you are working with a British literature anthology, you will find many selections gathered for you and your students. The works are also readily available on the Internet. Major works can greatly help to enhance students' appreciation of these centuries of the British tradition. If you are working with high school juniors or seniors, you may want to consider one or more of the following texts. Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* tells a gripping story and works with important themes regarding scientific advancement and human limitations. Jane Austen's irony and comedic perspectives help us to see connections between the twenty-first century and life two centuries ago in timeless books like *Pride and Prejudice*. You can also work with novels from Charles Dickens, Thomas Hardy, and the Brontë sisters.

Sometimes students question why they have to study British literature. One reason is that the English literary tradition includes some of the greatest writers the world has ever known, and these writers continue to influence life and literature today. Students may also question why they have to study works that are well over a century old. On one level, this is a matter of cultural literacy; on another, poems and stories from long ago intensify our understanding that although society is much changed, human nature, with both its strengths and its weaknesses, is fairly constant.

Lesson 1

Magazines and the Growth of Nonfiction

Objectives

- To study the origins and styles of early magazines
- To read and respond to several articles from magazines of the early eighteenth century
- To collaborate to produce an issue of a magazine

Notes to the Teacher

Magazines of the eighteenth century bear little resemblance to the colorful issues we see on display racks today. The early publications combined the functions of today's magazines (discussing trends and ideas) and newspapers (conveying current information). The development of journalism was supported by all classes of an increasingly literate society, especially by the middle class. If, as Joseph Addison claimed, one out of four Londoners read *The Spectator*, magazines were successful both intellectually and economically. A list of writers who either published in or wrote for magazines reads like a *who's who* of the neoclassical literary community.

Early magazines developed gradually, and they tended to have fairly short lives, publishing a few issues for a few years and then going out of business. They gradually acquired features such as letters to the editor and satirical character sketches. Two of the most important people in the development of eighteenth century journalism were Joseph Addison (1672–1719) and Richard Steele (1672–1729). *The Tatler* (1709–1711) bore the motto, "Whatever men do is the subject of this book." A few of the early journalistic publications lasted for quite a while. *The Gentleman's Magazine* began in 1731 and was published consistently for 181 years. *The Lady's Magazine* had its inception in 1770 and continued to appear until 1837.

Magazines did much to advance the development of nonfiction prose, especially exposition and argumentation, two skills at the heart of many writing programs today. This lesson presents information about Addison and Steele and engages students in discussion of several of their writings. You may find it useful to bring to class issues of diverse magazines such as *Time, Field and Stream, Seventeen, People,* and *Good Housekeeping.* You will also want to use the Internet to share images of magazines from the eighteenth century (key words: *eighteenth century magazines*).

Procedure

1. Display copies of some of today's magazines, and ask students what types of information are typically included

   Examples: *articles, letters, advertisements, editorials, photographs, and drawings*

2. Ask students what people find appealing about magazines, including online magazines. For example, they are published periodically, so information can be up-to-the-minute; they are easily portable and often easy to read; they include images and (online) videos; or they provide a sense of networking with people who have similar interests.

3. Use the Internet to show students pictures of the covers of several eighteenth-century magazines, and point out that, in contrast to today's publications, the covers are rather drab. The publications look something like newspapers, pamphlets, or thin books. Printing was still in its early stages of development. What they have in common with today's magazines is a variety of articles on diverse topics.

4. Explain that two men named Joseph Addison and Richard Steele were among the earliest London journalists, and distribute **Handout 1** for students to complete. Then ask them to describe the main purpose of the excerpt (Addison was dealing with the nature of true humor, for example). Have students discuss their responses to the questions.

   Suggested Responses

   1. Some people have a genuine gift for humor. Others try to be funny, but their efforts sometimes fall flat and or are offensive. Humor involves perfect timing and a certain amount of tact.
   2. Addison acknowledged that it is not easy to define humor, so he used allegory. He associated true humor with truth, good sense, wit, and mirth. All of these are positive qualities.
   3. Conversely, false humor is connected with falsehood, nonsense, frenzy, and folly. Addison associated this spurious humor with constant and meaningless laughter.
   4. True humor is a precious trait. It is all too easy for people attempting to be humorous to become crude or to be described as "dumb."

5. Ask students to complete **Handout 2.**

   Suggested Responses

   1. Steele notes that some people always want to be the center of attention; for them, everything revolves around first-person pronouns. Others keep a low profile and prefer privacy.
   2. The title indicates the main purpose. Steele describes setting aside time to think about loved ones who have died. The experience evokes sorrow, but there is also a kind of pleasure in remembering things shared in the past.

3. Loss is universal, and dealing with it is a necessity. For many people, Memorial Day or the annual reminder of a birthday or anniversary is an occasion for recollection.

6. Once again have students look at the magazines that you brought to class. Ask students how many people are involved in producing a single issue of a magazine. Lead them to see that the project involves a multitude of writers, editors, illustrators, typesetters, and advertisers. Ask the class to collaborate to create a magazine issue for a specific publication date that has some significance in your school. The date will have an impact on content. Have students select a title and brainstorm a list of contents. Then assign tasks, including those of editor-in-chief and layout manager. When the publication is completed, make digital or print copies for the class as a whole and use them for a discussion of how audience and purpose drive the process of writing and producing a publication.

Name:

Joseph Addison on the Nature of Humor

Directions: The following excerpt comes from an article entitled "False and True Humor" that Joseph Addison published in the April 10, 1711, edition of *The Spectator*. Read it, and answer the questions.

> It is, indeed, much easier to describe what is not Humour, than what is; and very difficult to define it otherwise than as *Cowley* has done Wit, by Negatives. Were I to give my own notions of it, I would deliver them after *Plato*`s manner, in a kind of Allegory, and, by supposing Humour to be a Person, deduce to him all his Qualifications, according to the following Genealogy. TRUTH was the Founder of the Family, and the Father of GOOD SENSE. GOOD SENSE was the Father of WIT, who married a Lady of Collateral Line called MIRTH, by whom he had issue HUMOUR. HUMOUR therefore being the youngest of this Illustrious Family, and descended from Parents of such different Dispositions, is very various and unequal in his Temper; sometimes you see him putting on grave Looks and a solemn Habit, sometimes airy in his Behaviour and fantastick in his Dress: Insomuch that at different times he appears as serious as a Judge, and as jocular as a *Merry-Andrew*. But as he has a great deal of the Mother in his Constitution, whatever Mood he is in, he never fails to make his Company laugh.
>
> But since there is an Impostor abroad, who takes upon him the Name of this young Gentleman, and would willingly pass for him in the World; to the end that well-meaning Persons may not be imposed upon by Cheats, I would desire my Readers, when they meet with this Pretender, to look into his Parentage, and to examine him strictly, whether or no he be remotely allied to TRUTH, and lineally descended from GOOD SENSE? if not, they may conclude him a Counterfeit. They may likewise distinguish him by a loud and excessive Laughter, in which he seldom gets his Company to join with him. For as TRUE HUMOUR generally looks serious, whilst every Body laughs about him; FALSE HUMOUR is always laughing, whilst every Body about him looks serious. I shall only add, if he has not in him a Mixture of both Parents, that is, if he would pass for the Offspring of WIT without MIRTH, or MIRTH without WIT, you may conclude him to be altogether Spurious, and a Cheat.
>
> The Impostor of whom I am speaking, descends originally from FALSEHOOD, who was the Mother of NONSENSE, who was brought to Bed of a Son called FRENZY, who Married one of the Daughters of FOLLY, commonly known by the name of LAUGHTER, on whom he begot that Monstrous Infant of which I have been here speaking.

1. How hard is to be funny?

2. What attributes did Joseph Addison associate with true humor?

3. According to Addison, what is false humor?

4. Do his ideas still hold true today?

Name:

Recollections from Richard Steele

Directions: The following paragraph introduces an essay entitled "Recollections" that Richard Steele published in the June 6, 1710, issue of *The Tatler*. Steele and Addison collaborated as journalists in the early years of the eighteenth century. Read the paragraph, and answer the questions.

> There are those among mankind, who can enjoy no relish of their being, except the world is made acquainted with all that relates to them, and think every thing lost that passes unobserved; but others find a solid delight in stealing by the crowd, and modelling their life after such a manner, as is as much above the approbation as the practice of the vulgar. Life being too short to give instances great enough of true friendship or good will, some sages have thought it pious to preserve a certain reverence for the names of their deceased friends; and have withdrawn themselves from the rest of the world at certain seasons, to commemorate in their own thoughts such of their acquaintance who have gone before them out of this life. And indeed, when we are advanced in years, there is not a more pleasing entertainment, than to recollect in a gloomy moment the many we have parted with that have been dear and agreeable to us, and to cast a melancholy thought or two after those with whom, perhaps, we have indulged ourselves in whole nights of mirth and jollity. With such inclinations in my heart I went to my closet yesterday in the evening, and resolved to be sorrowful; upon which occasion I could not but look with disdain upon myself, that though all the reasons which I had to lament the loss of many of my friends are now as forcible as at the moment of their departure, yet did not my heart swell with the same sorrow which I felt at the time; but I could, without tears, reflect upon many pleasing adventures I have had with some, who have long been blended with common earth. Though it is by the benefit of nature, that length of time thus blots out the violence of afflictions; yet, with tempers too much given to pleasure, it is almost necessary to revive the old places of grief in our memory; and ponder step by step on past life, to lead the mind into that sobriety of thought which poises the heart, and makes it beat with due time, without being quickened with desire, or retarded with despair, from its proper and equal motion. When we wind up a clock that is out of order, to make it go well for the future, we do not immediately set the hand to the present instant, but we make it strike the round of all its hours, before it can recover the regularity of its time. Such, thought I, shall be my method this evening; and since it is that day of the year which I dedicate to the memory of such in another life as I much delighted in when living, an hour or two shall be sacred to sorrow and their memory, while I run over all the melancholy circumstances of this kind which have occurred to me in my whole life.

1. What two kinds of people does Steele mention at the beginning of the paragraph?

2. What is the paragraph's main topic?

3. How relevant is the paragraph in today's world?

Lesson 2

Jonathan Swift's Serious Satire

Objectives

- To understand the nature of satire
- To examine Jonathan Swift's use of satire in "A Modest Proposal"
- To appreciate satire in an excerpt from *Gulliver's Travels*

Notes to the Teacher

Satire's origins are ancient and vague. It is evident in the comedies of Aristophanes, as well as in medieval legends and ballads. It reached its peak in England during the neoclassical eighteenth century, which is sometimes called the Age of Satire. As Jonathan Swift said, "Satire is a sort of glass, wherein beholders do generally discover everybody's face but their own." It ridicules people and events in an effort to improve society by showing its weaknesses. Like much humor, satire sometimes loses its relevance over the course of time. Political cartoons that delight one era may seem unintelligible to another.

Jonathan Swift (1667–1745) is best known as a master of the satiric form. He mounted bitter criticisms targeting the weaknesses of governments, institutions, and leaders. In *Gulliver's Travels* (1726), his wandering narrator provides enough material to satirize the entire human race. In "A Modest Proposal" (1729), Swift aimed to reveal the horror of the Irish economic situation. He attempted to reform society by portraying abuses. His work challenged readers to modify their thinking. "A Modest Proposal" presents an interesting dilemma. Swift wrote with two separate viewpoints: his own and that of a persona who firmly believed in the logic of the cannibalism he was proposing. This rhetorical device may cause difficulties for some students at first.

Because "A Modest Proposal" is a rather lengthy essay, you will find it more effective to have students read it online than to provide copies. It is available at many Web sites. The class will not need copies for this lesson. Handout 5 presents an excerpt from *Gulliver's Travels*. You may want to use a source such as the Project Gutenberg website to show students illustrations from the first edition of the book.

Procedure

1. Ask students to define the word *satire*. Lead them to see that satire is often associated with comedy, and it uses extreme exaggeration to criticize society or individuals. Political cartoons, for example, are a form of satire. Point out that failure to recognize that an image or writing is satiric in intent can result in a complete lack of understanding.

2. Distribute **Handout 3,** and use it to explain devices of satire.

3. Provide a little background about Jonathan Swift, and have students read "A Modest Proposal." Then ask students to brainstorm responses. (Note: Students who have not caught the satiric nature of the essay often express horror.)

4. Distribute **Handout 4,** and have small groups complete the exercise. Follow with class discussion.

Suggested Responses

1. The speaker describes landlords' policies, finery of the dress of ladies and gentlemen, limitations of Irish industry and business, and religion.
2. Swift emphasizes extreme poverty, overpopulation, absentee landlords, domestic violence, abandonment of children, and idleness.
3. Understatement tends to be subtle. The essay uses understatement in describing saving pigs from slaughter, hunting children, the rate at which sick people die, and charity toward landlords.
4. Examples include the details about population figures and cooking techniques.
5. Irony is evident in the title of this not-so-modest proposal, as well as in the author's claim that he has nothing to gain from the idea. Throughout the essay Swift says the opposite of what he means.
6. A gullible reader would conclude that Jonathan Swift really advocated cannibalism and would probably find the imagery repulsive.

5. Provide an overview of *Gulliver's Travels*:

   ***Example**: A fictional sailor named Lemuel Gulliver describes his travels and encounters with various types of societies. In the first part of the book, Gulliver describes being marooned in a land where all of the people are incredibly tiny—mere inches tall. Gulliver stays among the Lilliputians for a while and learns quite a lot about them.*

6. Distribute **Handout 5,** and ask students to complete the exercise.

Suggested Responses

1. The humor comes from people making a very big deal out of something that is insignificant. Readers sense that the bit about the eggs is actually not about eggs at all.
2. Swift indicates that polarizations, battles, wars, and deaths often occur because of minor details and events escalating out of control. In this view, people and governments are very foolish.
3. Clarify that satirists are motivated by a desire to effect change, and they use mockery, exaggeration, and irony as important tools. Assign students to create original satires, through either writing or drawing, ridiculing something they would like to see changed. Emphasize that the first task is to identify something they do not appreciate about the way things are; the second task is to poke fun at it. If necessary, have the class brainstorm possibilities, such as dress code, curfew, style of leadership, difficulty finding a good job, or clothing styles.

Name:

Devices of Satire

Directions: Listed below are some devices often characteristic of satires. Read the descriptions and the examples.

Device	Description	Example
Mockery	Derision; making fun of something	"Man is the only animal that blushes—or needs to." —Mark Twain
Sarcasm	Harsh language that uses praise in a mocking way and is usually intended to hurt	Someone refers to a thin, weak person as a "real he-man."
Overstatement	Hyperbole or exaggeration; saying more than one means	"I had to wait about a thousand years in the dentist's office."
Understatement	Saying less than one means	"Mount Everest is not a small climb."
Parody	Imitation, often involving mockery	General MacArthur: "Old soldiers never die; they just fade away." Parody: "Old blondes never gray; they just dye away."
Verbal irony	Saying one thing but meaning another	On a cold, sleety morning, someone says, "Lovely weather we're having!"
Bathos	A quick shift from the serious to the ridiculous	"I love my country, my family, my friends, and chocolate candy."
Mock heroic language	Imitation and exaggeration of the literary style of an epic	Describing a shoe store clerk with language one would use about a hero like Beowulf

Name:

Satire in "A Modest Proposal"

Directions: After you read the essay, use the following prompts to analyze Jonathan Swift's brilliant use of satire.

1. Find specific examples of ways the satire targets the English, whose laws and regulations oppressed the people of Ireland.

2. Find specific examples in which Swift aims his satire at the Irish people themselves.

3. In what ways does the speaker in the essay use understatement?

4. Find examples of overstatement.

5. How does the writer/speaker employ verbal irony?

6. In what ways would a reader who does not recognize Swift's use of satire misunderstand the essay?

Name:

Political Satire in *Gulliver's Travels*

Directions: The following excerpt comes from chapter 4 of the novel. The narrator, Lemuel Gulliver, finds himself with a race of minute people in Lilliput and describes a political situation there. Read the passage, and answer the questions.

> Our histories of six thousand moons make no mention of any other regions than the two great empires of Lilliput and Blefuscu. Which two mighty powers have, as I was going to tell you, been engaged in a most obstinate war for six-and-thirty moons past. It began upon the following occasion. It is allowed on all hands, that the primitive way of breaking eggs, before we eat them, was upon the larger end; but his present majesty's grandfather, while he was a boy, going to eat an egg, and breaking it according to the ancient practice, happened to cut one of his fingers. Whereupon the emperor his father published an edict, commanding all his subjects, upon great penalties, to break the smaller end of their eggs. The people so highly resented this law, that our histories tell us, there have been six rebellions raised on that account; wherein one emperor lost his life, and another his crown. These civil commotions were constantly fomented by the monarchs of Blefuscu; and when they were quelled, the exiles always fled for refuge to that empire. It is computed that eleven thousand persons have at several times suffered death, rather than submit to break their eggs at the smaller end. Many hundred large volumes have been published upon this controversy: but the books of the Big-endians have been long forbidden, and the whole party rendered incapable by law of holding employments. During the course of these troubles, the emperors of Blefuscu did frequently expostulate by their ambassadors, accusing us of making a schism in religion, by offending against a fundamental doctrine of our great prophet Lustrog, in the fifty-fourth chapter of the Blundecral (which is their Alcoran). This, however, is thought to be a mere strain upon the text; for the words are these: 'that all true believers break their eggs at the convenient end.'

1. What is the source of humor here?

2. What are the targets of this satirical piece?

3. What motivates the writer?

Lesson 3

Alexander Pope and Social Satire

Objectives

- To understand some of the thinking of Alexander Pope
- To recognize characteristics of neoclassical perspectives
- To appreciate the satire in *The Rape of the Lock*
- To write and deliver an effective one-minute speech

Notes to the Teacher

Alexander Pope (1688–1744) was first and foremost a social poet whose language and subject matter were directed to the reading public. The subject is often human nature, but he also wrote about politics, education, economics, and the arts. A spokesman for neoclassical poetry, Pope dominated the literary scene in the first half of the eighteenth century. With the exception of William Shakespeare, he is perhaps the most frequently quoted of all English poets. In this lesson, students first examine some of his famous sayings that are often used today by people who have no idea they are quoting an eighteenth century writer and philosopher.

Students then read and discuss an excerpt from Pope's mock epic, *The Rape of the Lock*. The idea for the poem originated in a conflict between two families that started when a young man cut a lock of hair from the coiffure of a young woman. A true epic is characterized by great battles and larger-than-life figures. Mock epics parody epic characteristics for comic effect. Pope makes brilliant fun of human vanity.

You will want to acquire portraits by eighteenth century painters such as Thomas Gainsborough or Joshua Reynolds. (One suggestion is Reynolds's *Lavinia Bingham, 2nd Countess Spencer*. It and other portraits are readily available on the Internet.)

Procedure

1. Explain that Alexander Pope was one of the most influential people in the British literary world during the first half of the eighteenth century. He was a small man with a very large intelligence and a sparkling wit that could be cruel. He is often associated with "heroic couplets"—pairs of rhyming lines of iambic pentameter—and even today he is one of the most frequently quoted English poets.

2. Distribute **Handout 6,** and have small groups complete the exercise.

Suggested Responses

1. The clever simile in this heroic couplet satirizes people's tendency to disregard others' opinions.
2. The famous second line exalts the capacity to forgive.
3. The simile points out that writing is not so much an inborn talent as an art based on practice.
4. Not everything new is good; not everything old is good.
5. To know ourselves, we need to absorb the way others see us, whether or not those others like us.
6. This often quoted line describes the human tendency toward hope when the odds seem to be against us. The line is often quoted facetiously.
7. Another famous line, this one indicating the need for broad and deep learning, lest we draw false conclusions from superficial knowledge.
8. Sometimes it is better and certainly safer not to get involved.
9. This somewhat cynical line is often described as Pope's ninth beatitude.
10. Humor requires more than mere cleverness.

3. Show students some pictures of ladies' dress and coiffures early in the eighteenth century. Emphasize that fashions, then as now, originated in France, and extremely elaborate hairstyles were in vogue.

4. Tell students the story of Arabella Fermor and Robert, Lord Petre:

   Example: *Arabella (Belinda in Pope's poem) was a young London socialite highly regarded for her beauty. At a social gathering, Lord Petre (the Baron in the poem), also young, took the opportunity to cut off a lock of her hair. She was not amused, and the incident caused the estrangement of the families. Alexander Pope was asked to write a poem about the event in the hope that humor could restore the relationship. The result was* The Rape of the Lock, *a long poem that is classified as a mock epic. It uses the elevated language and events characteristic of the epic form to make fun of human foibles.*

5. Point out that satire is evident immediately in the title. Snipping off a lock of hair may be offensive, but it hardly qualifies as rape. From the outset Pope exaggerates the event. Distribute **Handout 7,** and ask students to complete the exercise.

Suggested Responses

1. The phrase "trivial things" makes it clear that Pope thought the snatched hair was not a very serious offense, but one that could lead to major conflict.
2. The lines mock Belinda's morning rituals of adorning herself with makeup and jewelry. Pope describes it and she seems to experience it with all of the seriousness of a liturgical ceremony, using the term *mystic.*
3. Clarissa, another woman at the fete, provides the scissors.
4. Pope exaggerates both the Baron's and Belinda's responses to emphasize their vanity about physical appearance.

5. After speaking as if the loss of the lock of hair were a genuine disaster, Belinda shows that her real concern is her coiffure.
6. She portrays herself as a victim of her own beauty.
7. Belinda tosses snuff at the young man, causing a gigantic sneeze.
8. The lock of hair is fancifully transformed to a heavenly body that will outlast Belinda herself. She is immortalized because beauty inspires the imagination; at the same time, the poem makes fun of her vanity.

6. Direct students to select a quotation from **Handout 6** and to use it in the opening sentence of a one-minute speech. Explain that the audience will be the other students in the class, and set a date on which the speeches will be delivered. (Note: The teacher resource page that precedes Handout 6 provides a sample evaluation rubric.)

Name:

Alexander Pope: Speech Rubric

Directions: Use the criteria for evaluation purposes.

Points	Central Idea	Length	Content	Audience Awareness	Poise
5	The opening sentence effectively included a quotation from Alexander Pope.	The speech made effective use of fifty to seventy seconds.	The speaker demonstrated a vivid and precise understanding of the relevance of the quotation to life today.	The speaker related the quotation to classmates' lives in vivid and interesting ways.	The speaker maintained eye contact and made effective use of gestures and vocal tones.
3	The sentence included a quotation, but its meaning was not quite clear.	The speech was approximately one minute in length, but the use of time could have been better.	The speaker demonstrated a general understanding of Pope's meaning.	The speaker clearly knew that the audience consisted of his/her peers.	The speaker was prepared but seemed tense and uncomfortable.
1	The opening sentence did not refer to Pope.	The speech was either way too short or way too long.	The speaker's understanding of the quotation was either vague or erroneous.	The speaker seemed to pay no attention to the interests or abilities of the audience.	The speaker read the speech in a monotonous tone, with little attention to the audience.

Name:

The Quotable Mr. Pope

Directions: With the exception of Shakespeare, Alexander Pope is probably the most frequently quoted of all English poets. Read and explain what Pope means in each of the following memorable statements.

1. 'Tis with our judgments as our watches; none
   Go just alike, yet each believes his own.
2. Good nature and good sense must ever join;
   To err is human, to forgive divine.
3. True ease in writing comes from art, not chance,
   As those move easiest who have learned to dance.
4. Be not the first by whom the new are tried,
   Nor yet the last to lay the old aside.
5. Trust not yourself; but your defects to know,
   Make use of every friend—and every foe.
6. Hope springs eternal in the human breast.
7. A little learning is a dangerous thing.
8. Fools rush in where angels fear to tread.
9. Blessed is the man who expects nothing for he shall never be disappointed.
10. Wit is the lowest form of humor.

Name:

The Rape of the Lock

Directions: Read the following excerpts from Pope's humorous mock epic, and answer the questions.

From Canto I
What dire offense from am'rous causes springs,
What mighty contests rise from trivial things, . . .
  Say what strange motive, Goddess! could compel
A well-bred lord to assault a gentle belle?
O say what stranger cause, yet unexplored,
Could make a gentle belle reject a lord?
In tasks so bold can little men engage,
And in soft bosoms dwells such mighty rage?
  Sol through white curtains shot a tim'rous ray . . .
And oped those eyes that must eclipse the day. . . .
Belinda still her downy pillow pressed,
Her guardian Sylph prolonged the balmy rest . . .
  And now, unveiled, the toilet stands displayed
    Each silver vase in mystic order laid.
First, robed in white, the nymph intent adores,
With head uncovered, the cosmetic powers.
A heav'nly image in the glass appears.
To that she bends, to that her eyes she rears.
The inferior priestess, at her altar's side,
Trembling begins the sacred rites of Pride.
Unnumbered treasures ope at once, and here
The various off'rings of the world appear;
From each she nicely culls with curious toil,
And decks the goddess with the glitt'ring spoil . . .
Now awful Beauty puts on all its arms;
The fair each moment rises in her charms,
Repairs her smiles, awakens ev'ry grace,
And calls forth all the wonders of her face . . . .

1. Paraphrase the first two lines. How does Pope make his purpose clear?

2. How does Pope satirize Belinda's vanity in this passage? To what does he compare her "toilet" (grooming ritual)?

Name:

From Canto III

. . . But when to mischief mortals bend their will,
How soon they find fit instruments of ill!
Just then, Clarissa drew with tempting grace
A two-edged weapon from her shining case:
So ladies in romance assist their knight,
Present the spear, and arm him for the fight.
He takes the gift with rev'rence, and extends
The little engine on his fingers' ends;
This just behind Belinda's neck he spread,
As o'er the fragrant steams she bends her head. . . .
The meeting points the sacred hair dissever
From the fair head, forever, and forever!
    Then flashed the living lightning from her eyes,
And screams of horror rend th' affrighted skies.
Not louder shrieks to pitying heav'n are cast,
When husbands, or when lapdogs breathe their last;
Or when rich china vessels fallen from high,
In glitt'ring dust and painted fragments lie!
    "Let wreaths of triumph now my temples twine,"
The victor cried, "the glorious prize is mine!"

3. What role does Clarissa play in these events?

4. How does Pope use Belinda's and the Baron's responses to satirize human attitudes toward beauty and love?

Name:

From Canto IV

. . . "For ever curs'd be this detested day,
Which snatched my best, my fav'rite curl away!
Happy! ah, ten times happy had I been,
If Hampton Court these eyes had never seen!
Yet am not I the first mistaken maid,
By love of courts to num'rous ills betrayed.
Oh had I rather unadmired remained
In some lone isle, or distant northern land;
Where the gilt chariot never marks the way,
Where none learn ombre, none e'er taste bohea!
There kept my charms concealed from mortal eye,
Like roses that in deserts bloom and die.
What moved my mind with youthful lords to roam?
Oh had I stayed, and said my prayers at home! . . .
See the poor remnants of these slighted hairs!
My hands shall rend what ev'n thy rapine spares.
These in two sable ringlets taught to break,
Once gave new beauties to the snowy neck.
The sister lock now sits uncouth, alone,
And in its fellow's fate foresees its own;
Uncurled it hangs, the fatal shears demands;
And tempts once more thy sacrilegious hands.
Oh hadst thou, cruel! been content to seize
Hairs less in sight, or any hairs but these!"

5. What can the reader infer about Belinda from her closing lines?

6. How does she portray herself in this passage?

Name:

From Canto V

. . . "To arms, to arms!" the fierce virago cries,
And swift as lightning to the combat flies.
All side in parties, and begin th' attack;
Fans clap, silks rustle, and tough whalebones crack;
Heroes' and heroines' shouts confus'dly rise,
And bass and treble voices strike the skies.
No common weapons in their hands are found,
Like gods they fight, nor dread a mortal wound. . . .
[Belinda attacks the Baron, but to no avail. They are both deprived of the precious lock as it rises into the skies immortalized and transfigured into a heavenly body.]
But this bold lord, with manly strength endued,
She with one finger and a thumb subdued:
Just where the breath of life his nostrils drew,
A charge of snuff the wily virgin threw;
The Gnomes direct, to every atom just,
The pungent grains of titillating dust.
Sudden, with starting tears each eye o'erflows,
And the high dome re-echoes to his nose. . . .
"Restore the Lock!" she cries; and all around
"Restore the Lock!" the vaulted roofs rebound . . .
The lock, obtained with guilt, and kept with pain,
In ev'ry place is sought, but sought in vain:
With such a prize no mortal must be blest,
So Heav'n decrees! with Heav'n who can contest?
Some thought it mounted to the lunar sphere,
Since all things lost on earth, are treasured there. . . .
Then cease, bright nymph! to mourn thy ravished hair
Which adds new glory to the shining sphere!
Not all the tresses that fair head can boast
Shall draw such envy as the Lock you lost.
For, after all the murders of your eye,
When, after millions slain, your self shall die:
When those fair suns shall set, as set they must,
And all those tresses shall be laid in dust,
This Lock the Muse shall consecrate to fame,
And 'midst the stars inscribe Belinda's name.

Name:

7. How does Belinda subdue the Baron?

8. If Belinda is so vain and shallow, why is she immortalized at the end of the poem?

Lesson 4

Daniel Defoe's Journalistic Fiction

Objective

- To examine the journalistic fiction of Daniel Defoe

Notes to the Teacher

Daniel Defoe's contributions to eighteenth-century prose, especially the novel, are innumerable. Defoe (1660–1731) began his writing career with satiric essays. After some mysterious years as a secret agent for the British government, he surfaced again as a journalist, publishing *The Review*, a men's magazine that preceded *The Tatler* by five years. *Robinson Crusoe* (1719), a story based on an actual account, was the first popular adventure novel. *Moll Flanders* (1722), a mild satire on moralistic tracts, is one of the first comedies of social manners. *A Journal of the Plague Year* (1722) details the 1665 outbreak of the bubonic plague, which killed many Londoners. Defoe, drawing on his background in journalism, conducted interviews and read accounts of the plague. The result is the first work of journalistic fiction. This product of Defoe's imagination is presented as an eyewitness account. The work is noted for its verisimilitude; details create a sense of reality.

In this lesson students work with excerpts from both *Robinson Crusoe* and *A Journal of the Plague Year*. They then write original pieces of journalistic fiction.

Procedure

1. In the novel, Crusoe is stranded on an isolated island for a long time and manages to survive. Daniel Defoe got the idea from the actual story of a Scottish sailor who was a castaway on an island off the coast of South America. Ask students if they recognize the name Robinson Crusoe. Explain that Defoe was a prolific writer whose work was instrumental in the development of the novel.

2. Explain that *Robinson Crusoe*, Daniel Defoe's most famous work, is an early example of an adventure story. Distribute **Handout 8**, and ask students to complete the exercise.

Suggested Responses

1. The descriptions stress the magnitude and power of the ocean waves that carried Crusoe toward shore but also threatened to drown him. The paragraphs stress Crusoe's determination and later his gratitude, as well as an awareness that none of the other men on the ship survived.

2. Today libraries most often shelve *Robinson Crusoe* in juvenile or teen sections, but the syntax is far from simple. The first sentence, for example, is compound complex. There are three independent clauses, as well as an adjective clause modifying "wave," a participial phrase, and many prepositional phrases.
3. Anyone who has ever struggled to survive in rough water can identify with Crusoe's desperate attempts to reach shore. This was still an age of exploration, and people were fascinated by exotic locations described by sailors. In addition, people usually enjoy gripping adventure stories.

3. Explain that Daniel Defoe's *A Journal of the Plague Year* is a kind of historical fiction, a piece of journalistic fiction based on research and imagination. The plague occurred before he was born, so he had no personal experience of it.

4. Distribute **Handout 9**, and have the students read the excerpt and answer the questions.

Suggested Responses

1. Possibilities include the incident with the purse and the fact that victims of plague were locked up in an effort to contain contagion.
2. Sight: "gunpowder . . . train about two yards" and "tied in beds and chairs"; sound: "profound silence" and "piteous cries"; smell: "singed the purse . . . smoked the air"; color: "tongs red hot" and "brass farthings"
3. In times of great danger, people become very cautious and fearful; they do not entirely lose their greed; they crave freedom.
4. The first line might refer to a circle of mourners around a plague victim; "rosey" could refer to a flower or the flushed color of the body; flowers helped to mask the odor of the corpses; the ashes have to do with burning the bodies to stem contagion; the last line relates to the danger to everyone. The rhyme is from the oral tradition and comes in several forms. In one version, "ashes" is replaced with the sound of sneezing.

5. Point out that Daniel Defoe selected a situation in history and imagined himself in it; he wrote the novel as if it were the journal of someone living in London during the 1665 plague. Ask students to identify current or historical events that could inspire a similar fictional journal.

6. Have students work individually to write fictional journal entries as if they were present at an event. If necessary, suggest examples (e.g., Columbine High School, April 1999; New York City, September 11, 2001; Newtown, Connecticut, in 2012; or the Boston Marathon bombing in the spring of 2013). After students complete the assignment, have them share their results in small groups. Then have each group select one piece to be read to the class as a whole.

Name:

A Look at *Robinson Crusoe*

Directions: *Robinson Crusoe* is sometimes described as the first true adventure novel. It was immensely popular during Defoe's time and continues to be popular today. The book has never been out of print—unusual for a novel written so long ago. Read the following excerpt from chapter 3, in which Crusoe describes his attempts to reach safety on land after a shipwreck. Then answer the questions.

> The wave that came upon me again buried me at once twenty or thirty feet deep in its own body, and I could feel myself carried with a mighty force and swiftness towards the shore—a very great way; but I held my breath, and assisted myself to swim still forward with all my might. I was ready to burst with holding my breath, when, as I felt myself rising up, so, to my immediate relief, I found my head and hands shoot out above the surface of the water; and though it was not two seconds of time that I could keep myself so, yet it relieved me greatly, gave me breath, and new courage. I was covered again with water a good while, but not so long but I held it out; and finding the water had spent itself, and began to return, I struck forward against the return of the waves, and felt ground again with my feet. I stood still a few moments to recover breath, and till the waters went from me, and then took to my heels and ran with what strength I had further towards the shore. But neither would this deliver me from the fury of the sea, which came pouring in after me again; and twice more I was lifted up by the waves and carried forward as before, the shore being very flat.
>
> The last time of these two had well-nigh been fatal to me, for the sea having hurried me along as before, landed me, or rather dashed me, against a piece of rock, and that with such force, that it left me senseless, and indeed helpless, as to my own deliverance; for the blow taking my side and breast, beat the breath as it were quite out of my body; and had it returned again immediately, I must have been strangled in the water; but I recovered a little before the return of the waves, and seeing I should be covered again with the water, I resolved to hold fast by a piece of the rock, and so to hold my breath, if possible, till the wave went back. Now, as the waves were not so high as at first, being nearer land, I held my hold till the wave abated, and then fetched another run, which brought me so near the shore that the next wave, though it went over me, yet did not so swallow me up as to carry me away; and the next run I took, I got to the mainland, where, to my great comfort, I clambered up the cliffs of the shore and sat me down upon the grass, free from danger and quite out of the reach of the water.
>
> I was now landed and safe on shore, and began to look up and thank God that my life was saved, in a case wherein there was some minutes before scarce any room to hope. I believe it is impossible to express, to the life, what the ecstasies and transports of the soul are, when it is so saved, as I may say, out of the very grave: and I do not wonder now at the custom, when a malefactor, who has the halter about his neck, is tied up, and just going to be turned off, and has a reprieve brought to him—I say, I do not wonder that they bring a surgeon with it, to let him blood that very moment they tell him of it, that the surprise may not drive the animal spirits from the heart and overwhelm him.
>
> "For sudden joys, like griefs, confound at first."
>
> I walked about on the shore lifting up my hands, and my whole being, as I may say, wrapped up in a contemplation of my deliverance; making a thousand gestures and motions, which I cannot describe; reflecting upon all my comrades that were drowned, and that there should not be one soul saved but myself; for, as for them, I never saw them afterwards, or any sign of them, except three of their hats, one cap, and two shoes that were not fellows.

Name:

1. What does Crusoe stress about his efforts to reach shore? Cite specific images he uses.

2. Select one sentence that illustrates Defoe's ability to manage complex syntax. Analyze it.

3. Based on this excerpt alone, why do you think *Robinson Crusoe* was an instant best seller?

Name:

Daniel Defoe's Journalistic Fiction

Directions: In *A Journal of the Plague Year*, Defoe created a fiction based on facts about the 1665 plague in London. Read this excerpt, and answer the questions.

1665. It pleased God that I was still spared, and very hearty and sound in health, but very impatient of being pent up within doors without air, as I had been for fourteen days or thereabouts; and I could not restrain myself, but I would go to carry a letter for my brother to the Posthouse. Then it was, indeed, that I observed a profound silence in the streets. When I came to the Posthouse, as I went to put in my letter, I saw a man stand in one corner of the yard, and talking to another at a window, and a third had opened a door belonging to the office. In the middle of the yard lay a small leather purse with two keys hanging at it, and money in it, but nobody would meddle with it. I asked how long it had lain there; the man at the window said it had lain almost an hour, but they had not meddled with it, because they did not know but the person who dropped it might come back to look for it. I had no such need of money, nor was the sum so big that I had any inclination to meddle with it to get the money at the hazard it might be attended with; so I seemed to go away, when the man who had opened the door said he would take it up; but so that if the right owner came for it, he should be sure to have it. So he went in and fetched a pail of water, and set it down hard by the purse, then went again and fetched some gunpowder and cast a good deal of powder upon the purse, and then made a train from that which he had thrown loose upon the purse, the train reached about two yards. After this he goes in a third time, and fetches out a pair of tongs red hot, and which he had prepared, I suppose, on purpose; and first setting fire to the train of powder that singed the purse, and also smoked the air sufficiently. But he was not content with that; but he then takes up the purse with the tongs, holding it so long till the tongs burnt through the purse, and then he shook the money out into the pail of water, so he carried it in. The money, as I remember, was about thirteen shillings, and some smooth groats, and brass farthings.

There might, perhaps, have been several poor people, as I have observed above, that would have been hardy enough to have ventured for the sake of the money; but you may easily see, by what I have observed, that the few people who were spared were very careful of themselves at that time when the distress was so exceeding great. . . .

It would pierce the hearts of all that came by to hear the piteous cries of those infected people, who being thus out of their understandings by the violence of their pain, or the heat of their blood, were either shut in, or perhaps tied in their beds and chairs, to prevent their doing themselves hurt, and who would make a dreadful outcry at their being confined, and at their not being permitted to "die at large," as they called it, and as they would have done before.

This running of distempered people about the streets was very dismal, and the Magistrates did their utmost to prevent it; but as it was generally in the night and always sudden, when such attempts were made, the officers could not be at hand to prevent it, and even when they got out in the day, the officers appointed did not care to meddle with them, because, as they were all grievously infected, to be sure, when they were come to that height, so they were more than ordinarily infectious, and it was one of the most dangerous things that could be to touch them. On the other hand, they generally ran on, not knowing what they did, till they dropped down stark dead, or till they had exhausted their spirits so as that they would fall. . . .

Name:

1. Find some examples of verisimilitude (details that give the sense of reality). How, by giving details, does Defoe make us feel as though we are standing there next to him?

2. What sense impressions (sight, sound, smell, color) does Defoe use?

3. What does this selection seem to say about human nature in times of great disasters?

4. The following eighteenth-century verse refers to the plague. How many words and phrases can you interpret?

> Ring around the rosey,
> Pockets full of posies
> Ashes, ashes,
> We all fall down.

Lesson 5

Samuel Johnson

Objectives

- To recognize Johnson's contributions to eighteenth-century language and writing
- To consider the challenges in creating a dictionary
- To examine the ways that James Boswell sheds light on Johnson's character

Notes to the Teacher

Samuel Johnson (1709–1784) fits into many categories: poet, critic, essayist, moralist, lexicographer, and journalist. Johnson's writing epitomizes the neoclassical view of correctness, rules, art, art for people's sake, and didacticism. The preface to his1765 edition of the plays of William Shakespeare and his series *Lives of the Poets* (1779–1781) demonstrate his skill as both critic and biographer. He also advanced and popularized the periodical essay. *The Gentleman's Magazine*, *London Chronicle*, and *Universal Chronicle*, all magazines of his time, owed much to Johnson's contributions. His more than two hundred essays for *The Rambler* are moral in tone and written under fictitious names. The subject matter varies from sympathy for prostitutes to restriction of capital punishment. His many pamphlets are also political and moral in nature.

Johnson is probably best known today for his *A Dictionary of the English Language* (1755). Prior to this work, there was no significant English dictionary. He dedicated this work to "the use of such as aspire to exactness of criticism or elegance of style." Although his personal feelings and prejudices color some definitions, his achievement is nevertheless great.

We know much about Johnson from James Boswell's biography, without which Johnson would probably not be recognized as the preeminent literary figure of his time. In this lesson students discuss the colossal achievement that was Johnson's dictionary and one of his biographies of the poets.

Procedure

1. Explain that during his own time Samuel Johnson was so influential and prolific that the eighteenth century is sometimes referred to as the Age of Johnson. James Boswell, another writer of the period, was the author of a biography of Samuel Johnson. Read the following excerpt from the biography, in which Boswell describes the conclusion of one of their interviews.

> I attempted to continue the conversation. He was so provoked, that he said, "Give us no more of this"; and was thrown into such a state of agitation, that he expressed himself in a way that alarmed and distressed me; shewed an impatience that I should leave him, and when I was going away, called to me sternly, "Don't let us meet to-morrow."
>
> I went home exceedingly uneasy. All the harsh observations which I had ever heard made upon his character, crowded into my mind; and I seemed to myself like the man who had put his head into the lion's mouth a great many times with perfect safety, but at last had it bit off.

2. Ask students what the passage reveals about Johnson.

   Answer: *It sounds as if Johnson could appear unassuming but was actually a very forceful personality. The simile comparing him to a lion is especially vivid.*

3. Explain that in 1755 one of the best sellers was *A Dictionary of the English Language*, written by Samuel Johnson with the help of assistants. Before this time there was no comprehensive dictionary of English. Ask students how hard it would be to write a dictionary.

   Example: *The writer would need a comprehensive vocabulary and the ability to create accurate definitions. The task would be rather tedious.*

   Conduct a discussion based on the following questions.

   - Why do we use dictionaries?

     Dictionaries help with definitions, synonyms, and spellings.

   - Is there more than one kind of dictionary?

     Some are complete, others abridged; some specialize in specific types of vocabulary.

   - Why would it be a problem if no dictionaries were available?

     We would have to rely totally on guesswork and inferences. An objective standard would be missing.

   - What would motivate a person to write a dictionary?

     Factors might include genuine interest in language, love of order, and a desire to impose order in an age when science and classification were on the rise. The task would certainly require patience and attention to detail.

4. Ask students to write definitions for the following words:

   Air
   Butterfly
   Dull
   Electricity
   Noodle
   Oats
   Youth

5. Have volunteers share definitions. Then conduct a general discussion to refine the definitions, noting the difficulties inherent in defining words.

6. Have volunteers read the definitions on **Handout 10** aloud. Point out similarities/differences between Johnson's definitions and the students'.

7. Direct small groups to complete the handout.

Suggested Responses

1. Johnson did not associate the word *chicken* with poultry; the definition of *stateswoman* has changed; we do not associate *watching* with insomnia.
2. We see humor in Swift's verse on *chicken*, as well as in ironic comments on *dull* and *lexicographer.*
3. Examples include *terraqueous* in the definition of *air*; *chimerical* in the definition of *alligator*; *quadruped* in the definition of *horse;* and the entire definition of *network.*
4. The definition of *butterfly* seems dubious.
5. There may be a bias against Scotland in *oats* and against women in *stateswoman.*

8. Explain that among Johnson's many other accomplishments were biographies of poets. Distribute **Handout 11,** and ask students to complete the exercise. (Note: If students did not study Alexander Pope's work, you may want to describe his characteristic wit, use of rhymed couplets, and treatment of the conflict that resulted from the theft of a curl from a young lady's hairdo.)

Suggested Responses

1. Samuel Johnson portrays Pope as a genius who was reticent about family background; Johnson makes it clear that the poet was physically weak and highly educated. There seems to be irony in the comments about the sweetness of Pope's childhood voice.
2. The biography stresses Pope's intelligence, success, and willingness to work at the craft of writing. Johnson liked *The Rape of the Lock*.

9. Assign students to write mini-dictionaries of terms relevant to limited topics—e.g., dictionaries for anglers, skiers, or quilters. Each dictionary should include at least ten terms, correctly spelled, along with original definitions. Emphasize that students should not just copy definitions from other dictionaries.

Name:

Selections from Samuel Johnson's Dictionary

Directions: Read the following selections from Samuel Johnson's *A Dictionary of the English Language*. Then answer the questions.

Air	The element encompassing the terraqueous globe. If I were to tell what I mean by the word air, I may say, it is that fine matter which we breathe in and breathe out continually; or it is that thin fluid body in which the birds fly, a little above the earth; or it is that invisible matter, which fills all places near the earth, or which immediately encompasses the globe of earth and water.
Alliga`tor	The crocodile. This name is chiefly used for the crocodile of America, between which, and that of Africa, naturalists have laid down this difference, that one moves the upper, and the other the lower jaw; but this is now known to be chimerical, the lower jaw being equally moved by both.
A`rrow	The pointed weapon which is shot from a bow. Darts are thrown by the hand, but in poetry they are confounded.
Ba`llderdash	Any thing jumbled together without judgment; rude mixture; a confused discourse.
Bu`tterfly	A beautiful insect, so named because it first appears at the beginning of the season for butter.
Chick`en	A term for a young girl. "Then, Chloe, still go on to prate Of thirty-six and thirty-eight; Pursue your trade of scandal-picking, Your hints, that Stella is no chicken." —Swift
Dull	Not exhilarating; not delightful; as, to make dictionaries is dull work.
Electri`city	The industry of the present age . . . has discovered in electricity a multitude of philosophical wonders. Bodies electrified by a sphere of glass, turned nimbly round, not only emit flame, but may be fitted with such a quantity of the electrical vapour, as, if discharged at once upon a human body, would endanger life. The force of this vapour has hitherto appeared instantaneous, persons at both ends of a long chain seeming to be struck at once.
El`ephant	The largest of all quadrupeds, of whose sagacity, faithfulness, prudence, and even understanding, many surprising relations are given.
To hiss	To utter a noise like that of a serpent and some other animals. It is remarkable, that this word cannot be pronounced without making the noise which it signifies.

Name:

Horse	A neighing quadruped, used in war, and draught and carriage. Joined to another substantive, it signifies something large or coarse: as, a horseface, a face of which the features are large and indelicate.
Lexico`grapher	A writer of dictionaries; a harmless drudge that busies himself in tracing the original, and detailing the significance of words.
Net`work	Any thing reticulated or decussated, at equal distances, with interstices between the intersections.
Nood`le	A fool; a simpleton.
Oats	A grain, which in England is generally given to horses, but in Scotland supports the people.
To sneeze	To emit wind audibly by the nose.
States`woman	A woman who meddles with public affairs. In contempt.
Watch`ing	Inability to sleep.
Youth	The part of life succeeding to childhood and adolescence; the time from fourteen to twenty-eight.

1. Which words seem to have had different meanings in the eighteenth century from those they have today?

2. Occasionally Johnson incorporated humor into his definitions. Find examples.

3. Did Johnson ever use language that is too difficult for an effective definition? Explain your answer.

4. Are there any errors in these definitions?

5. Do you note any biases?

Name:

Samuel Johnson Describes Alexander Pope

Directions: Read the following excerpt from Samuel Johnson's *Lives of the Poets*, and answer the questions.

Alexander Pope was born in London, May 22, 1688, of parents whose rank or station was never ascertained: we are informed that they were of gentle blood; that his father was of a family of which the Earl of Downe was the head, and that his mother was the daughter of William Turner, Esquire, of York, who had likewise three sons, one of whom had the honour of being killed, and the other of dying, in the service of Charles the First; the third was made a general officer in Spain, from whom the sister inherited what sequestrations and forfeitures had left in the family.

This, and this only, is told by Pope; who is more willing, as I have heard observed, to shew what his father was not, than what he was. It is allowed that he grew rich by trade, but whether in a shop or on the Exchange was never discovered, till Mr. Tyers told, on the authority of Mrs. Racket, that he was a linen draper in the Strand. Both parents were papists.

Pope was from his birth of a constitution tender and delicate; but is said to have shewn remarkable gentleness and sweetness of disposition. The weakness of his body continued through his life, but the mildness of his mind perhaps ended with his childhood. His voice, when he was young, was so pleasing, that he was called in fondness the little Nightingale.

Being not sent early to school, he was taught to read by an aunt, and when he was seven or eight years old, became a lover of books. He first learned to write by imitating printed books; a species of penmanship in which he retained great excellence through his whole life, though his ordinary hand was not elegant.

When he was about eight, he was placed in Hampshire under Taverner, a Romish priest, who, by a method very rarely practised, taught him the Greek and Latin rudiments together. He was now first regularly initiated in poetry by the perusal of Ogylby's Homer, and Sandys's Ovid: Ogylby's assistance he never repaid with any praise; but of Sandys he declared, in his notes to the *Iliad*, that English poetry owed much of its present beauty to his translations. Sandys very rarely attempted original composition.

From the age of sixteen the life of Pope, as an author, may be properly computed. He now wrote his pastorals, which were shewn to the Poets and Criticks of that time; as they well deserved, they were read with admiration, and many praises were bestowed upon them and upon the Preface, which is both elegant and learned in a high degree; they were, however, not published till five years afterwards. . . .

The same year was written the Essay on Criticism; a work which displays such extent of comprehension, such nicety of distinction, such acquaintance with mankind, and such knowledge both of ancient and modern learning, as are not often attained by the maturest age and longest experience. It was published about two years afterwards, and being praised by Addison in the Spectator with sufficient liberality, met with so much favour as enraged Dennis, "who," he says, "found himself attacked without any manner of provocation on his side, and attacked in his person, instead of his writings, by one who was wholly a stranger to him, at a time when all the world knew he was persecuted by fortune; and not only saw that this was attempted in a clandestine manner, with the utmost falsehood and calumny, but found that all this was done by a little affected hypo-

crite, who had nothing in his mouth at the same time but truth, candour, friendship, good nature, humanity, and magnanimity." . . .

Not long after, he wrote *The Rape of the Lock*, the most airy, the most ingenious, and the most delightful of all his compositions, occasioned by a frolick of gallantry, rather too familiar, in which Lord Petre cut off a lock of Mrs. Arabella Fermor's hair. This, whether stealth or violence, was so much resented, that the commerce of the two families, before very friendly, was interrupted. Mr. Caryl, a gentleman who, being secretary to King James's Queen, had followed his Mistress into France, and who being the author of Sir Solomon Single, a comedy, and some translations, was entitled to the notice of a Wit, solicited Pope to endeavour a reconciliation by a ludicrous poem, which might bring both the parties to a better temper. In compliance with Caryl's request, though his name was for a long time marked only by the first and last letter, C—1, a poem of two cantos was written (1711), as is said, in a fortnight, and sent to the offended Lady, who liked it well enough to shew it; and, with the usual process of literary transactions, the author, dreading a surreptitious edition, was forced to publish it.

The event is said to have been such as was desired; the pacification and diversion of all to whom it related, except Sir George Brown, who complained with some bitterness that, in the character of Sir Plume, he was made to talk nonsense. Whether all this be true, I have some doubt; for at Paris, a few years ago, a niece of Mrs. Fermor, who presided in an English Convent, mentioned Pope's work with very little gratitude, rather as an insult than an honour; and she may be supposed to have inherited the opinion of her family.

At its first appearance it was termed by Addison merum sal. Pope, however, saw that it was capable of improvement; and, having luckily contrived to borrow his machinery from the Rosicrucians, imparted the scheme with which his head was teeming to Addison, who told him that his work, as it stood, was a delicious little thing, and gave him no encouragement to retouch it.

This has been too hastily considered as an instance of Addison's jealousy; for as he could not guess the conduct of the new design, or the possibilities of pleasure comprised in a fiction of which there had been no examples, he might very reasonably and kindly persuade the author to acquiesce in his own prosperity, and forebear an attempt which he considered as an unnecessary hazard.

Addison's counsel was happily rejected. Pope foresaw the future efflorescence of imagery then budding in his mind, and resolved to spare no art, or industry of cultivation. The soft luxuriance of his fancy was already shooting, and all the gay varieties of diction were already at his hand to colour and embellish it.

His attempt was justified by its success. *The Rape of the Lock* stands forward, in the classes of literature, as the most exquisite example of ludicrous poetry. Berkeley congratulated him upon the display of powers more truly poetical than he had shewn before; with elegance of description and justness of precepts, he had now exhibited boundless fertility of invention.

He always considered the intermixture of the machinery with the action as his most successful exertion of poetical art. He indeed could never afterwards produce any thing of such unexampled excellence. Those performances, which strike with wonder, are combinations of skillful genius with happy casualty; and it is not likely that any felicity, like the discovery of a new race of preternatural agents, should happen twice to the same man.

Name:

> Of this poem the author was, I think, allowed to enjoy the praise for a long time without disturbance. Many years afterwards Dennis published some remarks upon it, with very little force, and with no effect; for the opinion of the publick was already settled, and it was no longer at the mercy of criticism.

1. What was Johnson's overall opinion of Pope?

2. What does the biography stress regarding Pope's personal qualitities?

Lesson 6

The Emergence of Romanticism

Objectives

- To recognize characteristics of British Romanticism
- To understand the Romantic movement as a rebellion against neoclassicism
- To identify traits of Romanticism in a poem by William Wordsworth

Notes to the Teacher

The thirty-some years usually designated as the Romantic period in English literature are framed between two events: the publication of *Lyrical Ballads* in 1798 and the death of Samuel Taylor Coleridge in 1834. These years saw an intense philosophical rebellion against the Enlightenment, one sympathetic to the ideas about individual rights that generated motivation for the French and American revolutions.

Even before 1798, poets had challenged the hold of classicism on the English mind. The shift to vernacular language in medieval English literature and the representation of common people in medieval and Renaissance works typify attitudes that would later be labeled "romantic." In the eighteenth century, while Pope and Johnson dominated the literary scene with neoclassical themes and verse forms, numerous poets—among them Christopher Smart, Edward Young, William Cowper, Thomas Gray, Robert Burns, and William Blake—anticipated Romanticism with themes of isolation and retirement, death, and the wild beauty of nature.

Lyrical Ballads was a joint venture of poets William Wordsworth and Samuel Taylor Coleridge. The plan was for Wordsworth to write about the beauty and inspiration in common things, while Coleridge was to write about the supernatural. Both men wrote notable poems for the 1798 edition, among them "Lines Composed a Few Miles above Tintern Abbey" by Wordsworth and "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner" by Coleridge. Wordsworth directly attacked the poetical language of the neoclassical school in the preface to the volume:

> [Readers] accustomed to the gaudiness and inane phraseology of many modern writers . . . will, no doubt, frequently have to struggle with feelings of strangeness and awkwardness. . . . Such readers . . . while they are perusing this book, should ask themselves if it contains a natural delineation of human passions, human characters, and human incidents; and if the answer be favorable to the author's wishes . . . they should consent to be pleased in spite of that most dreadful enemy to our pleasures, our own pre-established codes of decision.

Clearly, Wordsworth and Coleridge knew that readers with classical tastes would ridicule their poems, but they hoped that readers with other tastes would be pleased. In the second edition of *Lyrical Ballads* (1800), Wordsworth wrote a long preface explaining his intentions in detail. One important passage describes the Romantic idea of what poetry is and how it originates:

> [P]oetry is the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings: it takes its origin from emotion recollected in tranquility: the emotion is contemplated till by a species of reaction, the tranquility gradually disappears, and an emotion, kindred to that which was before the subject of contemplation, is gradually produced, and does itself actually exist in the mind.

A second important passage explains why *Lyrical Ballads* was written:

> The principal object, then, . . . was to choose incidents and situations from common life, and to relate or describe them, throughout, as far as was possible, in a selection of language really used by men; and, at the same time, to throw over them a certain colouring of the imagination, whereby ordinary things should be presented to the mind in an unusual way; and, further, and above all, to make these incidents and situations interesting by tracing in them, truly though not ostentatiously, the primary laws of our nature. . . . Low and rustic life was generally chosen, because, in that condition, the essential passions of the heart find a better soil in which they can attain their maturity, are less under restraint, and speak a plainer and more emphatic language. . . .

In these two passages, Wordsworth makes three key points. His poetry (1) would be drawn from the humble and rustic life, (2) would contain the language people really use, and (3) would employ imagination in the depiction of "ordinary things" in "an unusual way." These characteristics soon became the primary forces behind the entire Romantic movement. In addition to their literary manifestations, the characteristics of Romanticism pervaded the music and visual arts of the time.

In this lesson students distinguish *Romanticism* as a literary term from modern terms dealing with love and romance. They learn how Romanticism differs from neoclassicism, and they discuss characteristic traits of Romantic writing. To see all of this theory in practice, students conclude by reading and discussing one poem by Wordsworth. Procedures suggest the use of music from Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (for example, Symphony No. 40) and Ludwig Beethoven (for example, Symphony No. 3) and art by Sir Joshua Reynolds and John Constable to clarify the differences between neoclassicism and Romanticism. These works and others are readily available on the Internet.

Procedure

1. Point out that just as in every generation young people rebel to some degree against the ideas of their parents, so generations of artists often revolt against previous norms. As each artistic movement reaches its peak of development, it no longer remains fresh and original, and as the original artists die off, only the imitators are left. Explain that this pattern emerged toward the end of the neoclassical period (during the eighteenth century) in English literature.

2. Play a selection from Mozart, then one from Beethoven. (Mozart's Symphony No. 40 and Beethoven's Symphony No. 3 are extremely clear examples.) In the Mozart selection, point out the balance, the carefully architectural sound. In the Beethoven piece, note the sudden eruptions of sound, the passionate emotion.

3. Show two pieces of visual art, one neoclassical (perhaps a portrait in the Grand Manner by Sir Joshua Reynolds) and one Romantic (perhaps a landscape by Constable). Point out the balance and restraint of the neoclassical painting and the exuberant focus on nature of the Romantic work.

4. Point out that the shift in focus extended far beyond art and music—not only to literature but also to politics and government.

5. Distribute **Handout 12,** and have students complete the activity. When they have finished, ask volunteers to read paragraphs aloud.

6. To clarify the differences between neoclassicism and Romanticism, ask students to classify the following items as one or the other and to explain their thinking.

    - ***Heroic couplets:*** *These were a favorite with neoclassical writers, who placed such great value on balance and symmetry. The Romantics preferred more spontaneous work.*
    - ***Melancholy brooding:*** *Romantics celebrated emotions more than logic; neoclassical writers would have been more likely to mock melancholy.*
    - ***Discipline:*** *Neoclassicists believed in restraint, order, and control; the Romantics preferred a certain amount of wildness.*
    - ***Democracy:*** *Democracy was born in the Romantic belief in the value of ordinary people. In many ways monarchy is more efficient and orderly.*
    - ***Formal portraits:*** *Romantics would prefer depictions in which the subject was not posed.*

7. Emphasize that in literary discussions we use the term *Romantic* in a broader way than contemporary culture tends to use it, confining it to love relationships. Romanticism embraces a full gamut of emotions.

8. Distribute **Handout 13,** and have partners complete the exercise.

Suggested Responses

1. The speaker describes a long spring walk in the country and coming upon a field of daffodils near a lake. A breeze was blowing through the flowers, making them look as if they were dancing. The water was sparkling, so the day must have been bright and sunny.
2. The fourth stanza shifts away from the memory to the time present. The speaker tends to get depressed, but the memory of coming upon that lovely spring scene in the country brings him comfort and even happiness.
3. The poem uses both meter (iambic tetrameter) and rhyme, and each of the four stanzas has six lines.
4. The long walk through the rural area is distinctly Romantic in tone, as is the celebration of the beauty of nature. So is the melancholy described in the fourth stanza, as well as the power of an experience of nature to provide solace.

Name:

Poles Apart

Directions: Read the descriptions of two styles of gardens. Then study the lists of characteristics, and write a paragraph contrasting the two movements.

A garden in the neoclassical style exhibits balance, order, and symmetry. One might expect parallel rows of trees and geometrical arrangements of neat flower beds, with clear pathways for walking. A maze and classical statuary might also be included.

A garden in the Romantic style, on the other hand, might tend to contain more native wildflowers than imported tulips and rely more on surprise than on symmetry. It would not include artificial elements, but rather would foster an atmosphere of wilderness instead of order.

Neoclassical (Eighteenth-Century) Characteristics	**Romantic (Late Eighteenth-Early Nineteenth Century) Characteristics**
Emphasis upon objective reason and planning	Emphasis upon subjective emotion, creativity, and spontaneity
Love of classical literature and literary forms	Love of one's own national literature and literary forms
Controlled, restrained writing dealing with typical topics	Wild, exuberant writing dealing with unexpected, exotic, and foreign topics
Balanced and symmetrical patterns	Objects contrasted with each other and arranged asymmetrically
Love of the city and industry	Love of the country and nature
Focus on aristocrats and the elite	Focus on the common people

Name:

Romanticism in Poetry

Directions: Read the following poem by William Wordsworth, who is often referred to as the Father of English Romanticism. Then answer the questions.

Daffodils
I wandered lonely as a cloud
That floats on high o'er vales and hills,
When all at once I saw a crowd,
A host, of golden daffodils;
Beside the lake, beneath the trees,
Fluttering and dancing in the breeze.

Continuous as the stars that shine
And twinkle on the Milky Way,
They stretched in never-ending line
Along the margin of a bay:
Ten thousand saw I at a glance,
Tossing their heads in sprightly dance.

The waves beside them danced; but they
Out-did the sparkling waves in glee:
A poet could not but be gay,
In such a jocund company:
I gazed—and gazed—but little thought
What wealth the show to me had brought:

For oft, when on my couch I lie
In vacant or in pensive mood,
They flash upon that inward eye
Which is the bliss of solitude;
And then my heart with pleasure fills,
And dances with the daffodils.

—William Wordsworth

1. The poem begins with a memory of a vivid experience. Describe it.

Name:

2. How does the fourth stanza switch the focus?

3. How does the poem demonstrate that the Romantics did not abandon organized forms?

4. What elements of the values of Romanticism are evident in the poem?

Lesson 7

Robert Burns, Scotland's National Poet

Objectives

- To recognize Romantic traits in poems by Robert Burns
- To appreciate the poet's use of the Scots dialect

Notes to the Teacher

Robert Burns (1759–1796) died before the publication of Wordsworth's *Lyrical Ballads*, but his poems demonstrate that Romanticism was in the making before Wordsworth and Coleridge officially founded it. Burns was born in a tiny cottage built by his father, a tenant farmer, and he was schooled at home. He wrote in a Scots dialect that was already beginning to disappear, and he won great admiration during his own short lifetime. Besides writing a wide body of poetry, he also collected and published Scottish folk songs, saving them from the oblivion that can befall oral traditions. A visit to Scotland today demonstrates national pride in his achievements, as well as great affection for the poet most often referred to as Robbie Burns. Centuries after Burns died, hundreds of Burns Suppers continue to be held on the anniversary of the poet's death; participants read his poems, eat Scottish foods, and drink Scotch whiskey.

In the neoclassical world of the eighteenth century, country folk were often regarded as oafish and rustic, lacking the elegance and polish treasured by society. The French philosopher Jean-Jacques Rousseau turned this attitude on its head with the idea that, saved from the corrupting influences of city and court, country people were actually superior. This view is typical of much Romantic poetry, and it is certainly evident in poems by Robert Burns.

For many students, the first challenge in reading Burns is dialect, which they often find difficult, especially in the longer poems. This lesson engages students in reading and discussing two short lyrics. For advanced classes, an optional procedure provides discussion of the humor and wisdom in "To a Louse." The first procedure suggests that you sing (or have someone else sing) the first stanza and the refrain for "Auld Lang Syne."

Procedure

1. Have students listen to the first stanza and the refrain of "Auld Lang Syne." Conduct a brief discussion of when people use these lyrics and what the mood of the song seems to be.

   Example: *This is a popular and ubiquitous song for New Year's Eve. The mood is both convivial and nostalgic. There is a sense of the temporariness of everything.*

2. Point out that these lyrics that remain in use today were written in the eighteenth century by a Scottish poet named Robert Burns, and provide a little information about him. (See "Notes to the Teacher.")

3. Distribute **Handout 14,** and ask students to read the poem and to write paragraphs in which they describe the speaker's purpose and attitudes. Collect the writings. Then ask students to complete the handout. If necessary, clarify uses of dialect (e.g., *gang* simply means "go"). Then have students share responses to the questions.

   Suggested Responses

   1. The woman the poet loves is as fresh and lovely as a red rose early in summer. The comparison conveys a sense of her elegance and beauty.
   2. The melody metaphor indicates that she is lovely and pleasing in every way.
   3. The tone is sincere as well as admiring.
   4. Hyperbole is evident in lines 8, 9, 10, and 16.
   5. The poem uses natural images and simple language. It is neither ornate nor fussy.

4. Ask students how the poem differs from other eighteenth-century works they have studied. Lead to the insight that the focus is not on wit or logic, but on the experience of being head-over-heels in love. The language is simple, and it is easy to identify with the speaker's feelings. Explain that Robert Burns anticipated characteristics of the Romantic style of poetry—love of nature, a preference for emotion over logic, spontaneity, and a focus on the lives of ordinary people.

5. Distribute **Handout 15,** and ask small groups to complete the exercise.

   Suggested Responses

   1. Images suggest a clear stream weaving through woods and hills and disappearing over the horizon. The scene is quiet and serene.
   2. Mary is asleep, and the speaker does not want her to be disturbed.
   3. Many lines celebrate the beauty and vitality of nature in its untamed state and celebrate a rustic rather than an urban setting.

6. Present students with the following lines from "To a Louse":

   "O wad some Pow'r the giftie gie us / To see oursels as others see us!"

   Ask the class to discuss the implications.

   ***Example**: Self-perceptions do not always match what others perceive; we would benefit greatly from knowing what others see in us.*

7. (Optional) Distribute **Handout 16,** and point out that "To a Louse" is much heavier in dialect than the other two poems. Describe the central situation in the poem.

   ***Example**: The speaker is in church behind a young lady who has a louse—singular of lice—crawling on her hat. She is completely oblivious to this, and the speaker seems highly amused.*

8. Read the poem aloud to the class. (If you have any Scots on the staff of your school, this can be a good time for a guest appearance from someone who can do an authentic burr.) Then conduct a discussion based on the questions.

   Suggested Responses

   1. The first two poems are musical lyrics with a soft and loving tone. This one is much longer and is humorous, with a moral lesson at the end.
   2. It seems that Jenny is very conscious of being pretty, and she may be a bit of a snob, but the speaker is amused more than critical. To him the louse on the hat is emblematic of something true of most of us: We are often blind to our own weaknesses and flaws.
   3. The poem warns against vanity, which can blind us to the way others see us.

Name:

Robert Burns in Love

Directions: Read the following poem by Scotland's national poet, and answer the questions that follow. Underline any dialect you do not understand.

A Red, Red Rose
O My Luve's like a red, red rose,
That's newly sprung in June;
O My Luve's like the melodie
That's sweetly played in tune!

As fair art thou, my bonnie lass,
So deep in luve am I;
And I will luve thee still, my dear,
Till a' the seas gang dry.

Till a' the seas gang dry, my dear,
And the rocks melt wi' the sun:
O I will luve thee still, my dear,
While the sands o' life shall run.

And fare thee weel, my only luve,
And fare thee weel, a while!
And I will come again, my luve,
Though it were ten thousand mile.

—Robert Burns

1. What is the significance of the reference to the rose?

2. Explain the reference to a melody.

3. Circle the word that best describes the poem's tone.

   cynical selfish sincere melancholic

4. What examples of exaggeration can you find?

5. How would you describe the poet's choice of details?

Name:

A Song by Robert Burns

Directions: Like many of Burns's poems, this one was intended as a song. Read it, and answer the questions.

Afton Water
Flow gently, sweet Afton, among thy green braes,
Flow gently, I'll sing thee a song in thy praise;
My Mary's asleep by thy murmuring stream,
Flow gently, sweet Afton, disturb not her dream.

Thou stock-dove whose echo resounds through the glen,
Ye wild whistling blackbirds in yon thorny den,
Thou green-crested lapwing, thy screaming forbear,
I charge you disturb not my slumbering fair.

How lofty, sweet Afton, thy neighboring hills,
Far marked with the courses of clear, winding rills;
There daily I wander as noon rises high,
My flocks and my Mary's sweet cot in my eye.

How pleasant thy banks and green valleys below,
Where wild in the woodlands the primroses blow;
There oft as mild evening weeps over the lea,
The sweet-scented birk shades my Mary and me.

Thy crystal stream, Afton, how lovely it glides,
And winds by the cot where my Mary resides;
How wanton thy waters her snowy feet lave,
As gathering sweet flowerets she stems thy clear wave.

Flow gently, sweet Afton, among thy green braes,
Flow gently, sweet river, the theme of my lays;
My Mary's asleep by thy murmuring stream,
Flow gently, sweet Afton, disturb not her dream.

—Robert Burns

1. Describe the picture this poem creates in your mind.

2. Why do you think Burns addresses the river rather than Mary?

3. List phrases in the poem that reflect a Romantic sensibility.

Name:

"To a Louse"

Directions: Carefully read the poem, and try to understand the dialect in context. Then answer the questions.

To a Louse: On Seeing One on a Lady's Bonnet at Church

Ha! whare ye gaun, ye crowlin ferlie!
Your impudence protects you *sairly*:
I canna say but ye *strunt* rarely,
Owre gauze and lace,
Tho' faith I fear ye dine but sparely,
On sic a place.

Ye ugly, creepan, blastit *wonner*,
Detested, shunn'd by saunt an' sinner,
How daur ye set your *fit* upon her,
Sae fine a Lady!
Gae somewhere else and seek your dinner,
On some poor body.

Swith! in some beggar's haffet squattle;
There ye may creep, and sprawl, and *sprattle*,
Wi' ither kindred, jumping cattle,
In shoals and nations;
Whare horn nor bane ne'er daur unsettle,
Your thick plantations.

Now *haud* you there, ye're out o' sight,
Below the *fatt'rels*, snug and tight,
Na, faith ye yet! ye'll no be right,
Till ye've got on it,
The vera tapmost, towrin height
O' Miss's bonnet.

My sooth! right bauld ye set your nose out,
As plump an' grey as onie *grozet*:
O for some rank, mercurial *rozet*,
Or fell, red smeddum,
I'd gie you sic a hearty dose o't,
Wad dress your *droddum*!

I *wad na* been surpriz'd to spy
You on an auld wife's *flainen toy*,
Or aiblins some bit duddie boy,
On's wylecoat;
But Miss's fine Lunardi fye!
How daur ye do't ?

Name:

O Jenny dinna toss your head,
An' set your beauties a' *abread*!
Ye little ken what cursed speed
The *blastie's* makin!
Thae winks an' finger-ends, I dread,
Are notice takin!

O wad some Pow'r the giftie gie us
To see oursels as others see us!
It wad frae monie a blunder free us
An' foolish notion:
What airs in dress an' gait wad lea'e us,
And ev'n Devotion!

—Robert Burns

1. How does this poem compare to the previous two by Burns?

2. What is the speaker's attitude toward Jenny?

3. What would you say is the theme of the poem?

Lesson 8

William Blake, Poet and Artist

Objectives

- To examine William Blake's concepts of innocence and experience
- To read and analyze three of Blake's most frequently anthologized poems

Notes to the Teacher

William Blake (1757–1827) saw himself as a mystic and reported having visions of great intensity from early childhood. He was trained as an artist and as an engraver, so it is not surprising that he wrote a highly visual brand of poetry. His powerful illustrations for a variety of works—including Dante's *Divine Comedy*, the Book of Job from the Bible, and Milton's *Paradise Lost*—reflect a form of rebellion against the Royal Academy's admiration of tame, sedate paintings. When he wrote his own poems, he engraved them on metal plates and included highly original designs. When they were printed, he added tints, usually in watercolors, by hand. Although the style is different, the finished product is reminiscent of the illuminated manuscripts of the Middle Ages.

Much of Blake's work is very difficult and beyond the ability and interest of most high school students. The exception is *Songs of Innocence and of Experience* (1789–1794), a slender volume of poetry that is his most famous work today. For Blake, experience was often equated with the world of adults, with its bitter wisdom and recognition of evil and hypocrisy. He associated innocence with children and their world of simplicity, spontaneity, and fresh energy.

When a reader charged him with obscurity, Blake wrote that children understood his poetry best and that his pictures delighted them. Adults also find Blake's engravings and pictures, with their swirling lines and forms and graceful yet powerful figures, fascinating. Blake's other writings explore many human facets with primary emphasis on the soul and the relationship of human beings to both God and the universe.

In this lesson, students focus first on the nature of innocence and experience. They then read and discuss several of Blake's most popular and accessible poems. You may want to share Blake's illustrations from *Songs of Innocence and of Experience* using either a printed book or the Internet.

Procedure

1. Use the teacher notes to present a bit of background about William Blake, and explain that he is often identified as a pre-Romantic poet because his works reflect Romantic thinking before the movement was officially initiated by William Wordsworth and Samuel Taylor Coleridge.

2. Tell the class that today Blake's most popular work is a book of poems entitled *Songs of Innocence and of Experience*. Ask students to brainstorm associations with both innocence and experience, and lead to the question of whether it is better to be innocent or experienced.

   ***Example**: We associate innocence with children. It is good to be found innocent in a court of law, but it is also good to be an experienced mechanic rather than a rookie. For most people it is both impossible and undesirable to maintain childhood innocence in adulthood. Experience is an essential part of growing into maturity; nonetheless, the innocence of childhood is precious.*

3. Divide students into small groups, and distribute **Handout 17.** Ask students to read the poem and respond to the questions.

   Suggested Responses

   1. The speaker's attitude toward the lamb is positive and possibly protective. The creature is small, sweet, and defenseless.
   2. The lamb is described as wooly, bright, tender, and little.
   3. The speaker is identified as a child, so childlike language is entirely appropriate.
   4. The central question is where the lamb came from—who created it? The lamb does not answer, but the speaker does with a directly religious response. Who created the lamb? God did. The lamb's response is unknown, but the speaker is joyful.
   5. The lamb represents goodness, gentleness, and profound innocence.

4. Ask students how they visualize the lamb. Then, if possible, share William Blake's original illustration for the poem.

5. Remind students that the title of Blake's book mentions both innocence and experience. If the lamb represents innocence, what animals might represent experience?

6. Distribute **Handout 18,** have students read the poem, and conduct a general discussion based on the questions.

   Suggested Responses

   1. The tone seems to combine fear, awe, and wonder. There is nothing sweet and cuddly about the tiger.
   2. Possibly a sense of danger, as one wonders if the tiger is within hearing distance of the speaker.
   3. A tiger has black and gold stripes, like a crackling fire, and, like all cats, its eyes glow in the dark.
   4. The tiger was made with a hammer and anvil, the way a blacksmith might forge iron. The tiger is associated more with technology than with nature.
   5. The tiger's creator must have the same power and ferocity to be able to dream up and put together such a creature.

6. The question of creator is again raised, and no answer is given.
7. In many ways the tiger is the opposite of the lamb, representing power, dread, and danger.
8. In "The Lamb," the trochaic rhythm is rolling and relaxed, with longer lines and full end-line stops. "The Tyger" also uses a trochaic meter, but the lines are short and gallop, imparting a more frenzied tone.

7. If possible, show students Blake's illustration of the tiger.

8. Point out that while the complexities of some of Blake's poems may be beyond the understanding of most children, even the very young respond to certain elements of his work such as the chant-like rhythms and the illustrations.

9. Distribute **Handout 19,** and have small groups complete the exercise. Follow with discussion.

Suggested Responses

1. With a true friend, it is not necessary to hide an annoyance; friends can communicate and anger can be mollified. With enemies, we might be more inclined to hold a grudge or plot revenge.
2. The smiles are part of a "nothing's wrong" mask.
3. The anger is compared to an apple tree that is carefully tended until it bears fruit. In this case the fruit is poison because it grew out of anger and resentment. (Several parallels with the Garden of Eden story might be discussed.)
4. The speaker grew the poison tree, no doubt hoping the enemy would partake of the fruit; on the other hand, no one forced the enemy to sneak into the garden and steal the fruit.
5. The poem suggests the negative effects of nursing a grudge instead of talking to resolve conflicts. The speaker is far from the innocence of a trusting child. (Note: If students have read Edgar Allan Poe's "The Cask of Amontillado," you might want to have them connect the story with the poem. Both center on how revenge affects both the perpetrator and the victim.)

10. Have students write essays in which they present an animal other than a lamb or a tiger as an emblem of innocence or experience.

Optional Assignment

If students have taken a liking to William Blake's work, have them read and report on additional poems from *Songs of Innocence and of Experience*. Reports can deal both with the poems and with the accompanying illustrations.

Name:

"The Lamb"—A Song of Innocence

Directions: Read the poem, and answer the questions that follow.

The Lamb

Little Lamb, who made thee?
Dost thou know who made thee?
Gave thee life & bid thee feed,
By the stream & o'er the mead;
Gave thee clothing of delight,
Softest clothing, wooly, bright;
Gave thee such a tender voice,
Making all the vales rejoice!
Little Lamb who made thee?
Dost thou know who made thee?

Little Lamb I'll tell thee,
Little Lamb I'll tell thee!
He is callèd by thy name,
For he calls himself a Lamb;
He is meek & he is mild:
He became a little child;
I a child & thou a lamb,
We are callèd by his name.
Little Lamb God bless thee!
Little Lamb God bless thee!

—William Blake

1. How do you think the speaker feels about the lamb?

2. Give four words to describe the lamb as depicted in the poem.

Name:

3. Why is it appropriate to use such simple language in addressing the lamb?

4. What question does the poem ask? Is an answer given?

5. What does the lamb seem to represent?

Name:

"The Tyger"—A Song of Experience

Directions: Carefully read the poem, and discuss the questions. In *Songs of Innocence and of Experience*, William Blake used a *y* in spelling *tiger*.

The Tyger
Tyger! Tyger! burning bright
In the forests of the night,
What immortal hand or eye
Could frame thy fearful symmetry?

In what distant deeps or skies
Burnt the fire of thine eyes?
On what wings dare he aspire?
What the hand dare seize the fire?

And what shoulder, & what art,
Could twist the sinews of thy heart?
And when thy heart began to beat,
What dread hand? & what dread feet?

What the hammer? what the chain?
In what furnace was thy brain?
What the anvil? what dread grasp
Dare its deadly terrors clasp?

When the stars threw down their spears
And water'd heaven with their tears,
Did he smile his work to see?
Did he who made the Lamb make thee?

Tyger! Tyger! burning bright
In the forests of the night,
What immortal hand or eye
Dare frame thy fearful symmetry?

—William Blake

1. What are the speaker's attitudes toward and feelings about the tiger?

2. As with the lamb, the speaker directly addresses the tiger. What does that add to the poem?

Name:

3. The tiger is compared to fire three times. Why is this appropriate?

4. How does the poet imagine the tiger being made?

5. What characteristics must the maker of this creature have? Why?

6. What question does the poem raise? Is any answer given?

7. How does this poem complement "The Lamb"? What does the tiger seem to represent?

8. Compare the rhythm of "The Tyger" to that of "The Lamb." How does the meter of each poem contribute to the feeling it conveys?

Name:

Another Song of Experience

Directions: Read the following poem by William Blake, and answer the questions.

A Poison Tree
I was angry with my friend:
I told my wrath, my wrath did end.
I was angry with my foe:
I told it not, my wrath did grow.

And I watered it in fears,
Night and morning with my tears;
And I sunned it with smiles,
And with soft deceitful wiles.

And it grew both day and night,
Till it bore an apple bright.
And my foe beheld it shine,
And he knew that it was mine,

And into my garden stole,
When the night had veiled the pole;
In the morning glad I see
My foe outstretched beneath the tree.

—William Blake

1. Why would someone discuss anger with a friend, but withhold the discussion from an enemy?

2. What seems to have been the purpose of the smiles mentioned in line 7?

3. What metaphor develops in the second stanza?

4. Whose fault is the enemy's death?

5. Does the poem have a theme? Why did Blake classify it as a "Song of Experience"?

Lesson 9

The Father of British Romanticism

Objectives

- To read and analyze several poems by William Wordsworth
- To understand the role that nature frequently plays in Romantic writing
- To identify additional characteristics of Romanticism

Notes to the Teacher

To understand the work of William Wordsworth (1770–1850), your students should know something of the natural surroundings in which he lived. The English Lake District is as much a part of Wordsworth's poetry as it was a dwelling place for his body; for him the district was a source of revitalizing inspiration. Cumbria, as it is now often called, is a compact area of northwestern England, a living record of the glacier that long ago hollowed out the landscape to leave steep cliffs and moors, dark pools, and areas of lush green pastures and fertile fields.

Not only did Wordsworth find inspiration in a place of lavish natural beauty, but he also took a different attitude toward nature from that of many poets of the previous century. Where, to the Enlightenment mind, nature reflected order in the universe, Romantic poets personalized nature and connected it with emotions. For Wordsworth, nature offered the perfect inspiration for a new philosophy of poetry.

In the preface to *Lyrical Ballads*, Wordsworth describes poetry as "emotion recollected in tranquillity." This lesson first presents "My heart leaps up," a tiny gem that encapsulates much of the spirit of the Romantic movement. Students then discuss "Upon Westminster Bridge," which presents early morning in London with much of the power of nature in rural areas. If your students have sufficient stamina for poetry, you can then go on to "Lines Composed a Few Miles above Tintern Abbey," which offers a fine example of Wordsworth drawing on emotions evoked by nature long after they occurred. If the class will be reading Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*, attention to "Tintern Abbey" is especially relevant.

The first twenty-two lines of "Tintern Abbey" describe a landscape in the popular "picturesque" manner. This method moves the eye deliberately from foreground to middle distance to background. Wordsworth leads the eye to the sky, cliffs, trees, fruit, cottages, hedgerows, lawns, and chimney smoke. Then he switches to describing his own emotional awareness of this scene as a sustaining power, revived at this moment in all its pure, uncorrupted force.

The poet then recalls boyhood with a new self-understanding. Now he is able to listen to the "still, sad music of humanity" and to unite himself with a sublime presence that joins nature and poet.

Because "Tintern Abbey" is quite long and can at first glance frighten students away, it is not reprinted on a handout here. Instead, have students read it either from an anthology or on the Internet, or read it aloud to them.

Procedure

1. Explain that William Wordsworth and Samuel Taylor Coleridge collaborated in the effort to bring a whole new kind of poetry to the eighteenth century. In 1798 they published a collection of poems called *Lyrical Ballads*. In a new edition a few years later, Wordsworth added an extensive preface.

2. Distribute **Handout 20,** and have students read the information in Part A and complete Part B.

   Suggested Responses

   1. The emotion is the happiness that seeing a rainbow inspires. This is one manifestation of joy in the beauty of nature. The speaker's feelings are not totally unique; if someone says, "Look, a rainbow!" invariably everyone wants to see it before it fades away.
   2. A rainbow is beautiful but totally useless. The Romantics valued nature in its wild state, uncontrolled by human energy or industry.
   3. The lines demonstrate parallel structure and stress the unity of the speaker's life and his desire not to lose his essential self as he ages.
   4. The choices we make shape what we become, so people in a sense "father" themselves.
   5. Wordsworth seems to assert that a person's whole life should be characterized by reverence for nature.

3. Distribute **Handout 21,** and ask students to complete the exercise.

   Suggested Responses

   1. The early morning sunlight, shining on a city entirely still except for the gently moving river, seemed to make everything glow with beauty. The poet says that it would be almost impossible for anyone with any sensitivity not to marvel at the scene.
   2. In the afternoon the air would no longer have been smokeless and the city would have been a beehive of activity.
   3. The poem celebrates emotion and beauty; it describes an ordinary scene at an extraordinary moment.

4. For further challenge, direct the class to read "Lines Written a Few Miles above Tintern Abbey" and to watch for characteristics of Romanticism.

5. Before discussing the poem, explain that Tintern Abbey was established as a monastery in Wales during the medieval period and was closed by King Henry VIII after the English Reformation. Today it is in ruins but also presents a spectacular sight that is a popular tourist attraction. If possible, show students some photographs from the Internet. Point out that in the poem Wordsworth is not at the abbey itself, but rather is in the vicinity, a rural area with mountains, valleys, farms, and forests. Perhaps he could see the ruins in the distance. Ask students what aspects of Romanticism they observed in their first reading of the poem (emphasis on nature's beauty and restorative power; focus on ordinary people; stress on emotions).

6. Distribute **Handout 22,** and ask small groups to complete it. Follow with discussion.

Suggested Responses

1. He seems to have often longed to return to this rural place, with its river, cliffs, trees, and farms.
2. Memories of the place have offered him peace and consolation in the midst of the cares and worries of his daily life.
3. He is very aware of having aged and not having as much physical energy as he once enjoyed.
4. He is addressing his sister, who has accompanied him to this special place. He sees her as his dearest friend.
5. There are many possibilities: "Nature never did betray / The heart that loved her"; "Let the moon / Shine on thee in thy solitary walk"; "by the banks of this delightful stream." The entire poem is a celebration of the restorative power of nature.
6. Possibilities include: "I have owed to them / In hours of weariness, sensations sweet"; "when the fretful stir / Unprofitable, and the fever of the world / Have hung upon the beatings of my heart"; "with what healing thoughts / Of tender joy wilt thou remember me." Wordsworth seems to have been melancholy about his age—only twenty-eight at the time—but he was no longer a youth.

7. Assign an essay that analyzes Romanticism as it is apparent in one of the following poems by Wordsworth:

   - "It Is a Beauteous Evening"
   - "She Dwelt among the Untrodden Ways"
   - "The Solitary Reaper"

   Distribute **Handout 23,** and advise students to use it as a tool for writing and revising their essays.

Name:

Wordsworth and Romanticism

Part A

Directions: Read the information.

In his preface to *Lyrical Ballads* William Wordsworth wrote the following definition of poetry.

> I have said that poetry is the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings: it takes its origin from emotion recollected in tranquillity: the emotion is contemplated till, by a species of reaction, the tranquillity gradually disappears, and an emotion, kindred to that which was before the subject of contemplation, is gradually produced, and does itself actually exist in the mind. In this mood successful composition generally begins, and in a mood similar to this it is carried on; but the emotion, of whatever kind, and in whatever degree, from various causes, is qualified by various pleasures, so that in describing any passions whatsoever, which are voluntarily described, the mind will, upon the whole, be in a state of enjoyment.

Notice his intense emphasis on emotion—not logical thought—as the heart of poetry. He also insists that ordinary life should yield subject matter for poetry and that poets should use language that sounds natural, not contrived. According to Wordsworth, good poetry creates the poet's feelings in the reader and shares basic truths of human life.

Part B

Directions: Read the following very short poem by Wordsworth, and answer the questions.

My heart leaps up when I behold
A rainbow in the sky:
So was it when my life began;
So is it now I am a man;
So be it when I shall grow old,
Or let me die!
The Child is father of the Man;
And I could wish my days to be
Bound each to each by natural piety.

—William Wordsworth

1. What powerful feelings form the basis of the poem?

Name:

2. How does the poem reflect the Romantics' love for untamed nature?

3. What do lines 4–6 emphasize?

4. Can you unravel the paradox in line 7?

5. What conviction do the last two lines convey?

Name:

Wordsworth in the City

Directions: William Wordsworth did not spend his entire life meandering around the Lake District. The following poem describes an experience he had in London. Read it carefully, and identify its Romantic elements. Then answer the questions.

Upon Westminster Bridge
EARTH has not anything to show more fair:
Dull would he be of soul who could pass by
A sight so touching in its majesty:
This City now doth like a garment wear

The beauty of the morning; silent, bare,
Ships, towers, domes, theatres, and temples lie
Open unto the fields, and to the sky;
All bright and glittering in the smokeless air.

Never did sun more beautifully steep
In his first splendour valley, rock, or hill;
Ne'er saw I, never felt, a calm so deep!

The river glideth at his own sweet will:
Dear God! the very houses seem asleep;
And all that mighty heart is lying still!

—William Wordsworth

1. What caused the city to look so beautiful to the poet?

2. Would the poet have had the same responses if he had been on the bridge in the middle of the afternoon?

3. To what extent does the poem manifest the spirit of Romanticism?

Name:

A Look at "Tintern Abbey"

Directions: Carefully read William Wordsworth's poem, and answer the questions.

1. Wordsworth says that he has returned to this site after a visit five years ago. What does he stress about the environment in the lines near the beginning of the poem?

2. In the five years since his last visit, what has this place meant to him?

3. How has the speaker changed since his last visit to this area?

4. To whom does the poet seem to be speaking as the poem ends?

5. Find three lines that seem to express Wordsworth's attitudes toward nature.

6. Find three lines that stress emotion.

Name:

Wordsworth Essay: Evaluation Rubric

Directions: Use the following criteria for evaluation purposes.

Points	Introduction	Comprehension	Romantic Elements	Textual Support	Diction and Syntax
5	The opening paragraph clearly identifies the name of the poet, the title of the poem, and Romantic elements.	The essay as a whole reveals a clear and compelling understanding of the poem.	The writer documents at least three specific Romantic elements in the poem and provides textual support.	The essay includes carefully selected quotations from the poem, as well as more general textual references.	The essay is skillfully written, with effective word choices and varied sentence structures.
3	The opening paragraph is adequate but could be more polished.	The essay reflects a general grasp of the poem.	The writer documents some specific Romantic elements and provides general support.	The essay does include textual evidence, but it could be more precise.	There are no serious language errors in the essay.
1	The opening paragraph does not make the essay's purpose clear.	The essay is erroneous in discussing the poem's content.	The essay shows little attention to the nature of Romanticism.	The essay consists of generalizations with little or no textual evidence.	The essay is flawed by significant mistakes in grammar, punctuation, and/or spelling.

Lesson 10

The Dream World of Coleridge

Objectives

- To understand Samuel Taylor Coleridge's role in founding British Romanticism
- To become acquainted with "Kubla Khan" and "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner"

Notes to the Teacher

The works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge (1772–1834) are often far removed from the world of everyday life. As he explained in his *Biographia Literaria*, in his collaboration with William Wordsworth on *Lyrical Ballads* his task was to take the supernatural, exotic, or weird and to render it believable by creating in the reader a "willing suspension of disbelief." In "Kubla Khan" he vividly re-created a dream he had. In his preface to the work, Coleridge explained its genesis. One evening in the summer of 1797, after taking laudanum, an opium preparation, he fell asleep while reading an Elizabethan book of travels that described the palace of the Chinese emperor Kublai Khan. He remained in a deep sleep for nearly three hours and, upon waking, found that he had, in his sleep, composed several hundred lines of verse describing the vivid images that had crowded into his head. He hurriedly began to write them down, but after fifty-four lines a knock at the door interrupted him. When his visitor finally left, Coleridge found that he could no longer recall the vision and was unable to add even a single line to what he had already written. "Kubla Khan" remains incomplete but also intriguing.

"The Rime of the Ancient Mariner," a lengthy narrative poem published in 1798 in the first edition of *Lyrical Ballads,* is probably Coleridge's most famous poem today. It had a significant influence on Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*. It, too, has a haunting and dreamlike quality. You may find it best to present the poem as part of a storytelling tradition by having students listen to it rather that confronting the class with the full poem in print.

Procedure

1. Explain that when Coleridge and Wordsworth collaborated in the first edition of *Lyrical Ballads,* Coleridge had the responsibility to produce poems that focused on exotic, weird, and dreamlike topics. The Romantics favored the simple life of common people, but they were also interested in the supernatural and in unexplainable events. Explain that Kublai Khan was a Chinese emperor, and provide a little background about "Kubla Khan" (See "Notes to the Teacher").

2. Distribute **Handout 24,** and ask students to complete the exercise. Follow with discussion.

Suggested Responses

1. There is something dreamlike and exotic about the poem and its many vivid images.
2. The poem's vision includes multiple images and involves vast distances and strange, disembodied voices. Contradictory states exist together as they can do only in dream worlds.
3. Dreams serve as ideal vehicles for personal symbolism and guidance. They are related more to idealism than to pragmatism.
4. The poem establishes a kind of spellbinding effect, almost like an incantation.
5. Examples include the haunted moon and the demon lover, as well as ancestral voices.
6. These details evoke thoughts of a wizard or a magician—or perhaps even someone who is insane.
7. Choices will vary. "A damsel with a dulcimer" seems very gentle and appealing. On the other hand, "caves of ice" suggest sterility and death.

3. Distribute **Handout 25,** and ask students to complete the exercise.

Suggested Responses

1. The quotation evokes an image of a sailor on a ship in the middle of the ocean, parched with thirst and surrounded by water that is useless to slake that thirst.
2. Metaphorically, the lines could apply to anyone who feels surrounded by but unable to access something he or she wants—love, success, or money, for example.
3. The simile conveys an image of a ship completely becalmed and unable to make any headway toward its destination—a potentially deadly situation for mariners. The simile suggests personal isolations.
4. The quotation applies to anyone who has had a bitter learning experience.
5. The commas slow down the reading and stress the painful isolation of the speaker—the sense of being completely unconnected with the rest of humanity.
6. The idiom describes a heavy burden brought on by one's own actions, one impossible to cast off and equally impossible to keep secret.
7. The quotation suggest that something happened to the ship, and the speaker, the only survivor, is stranded alone bearing a public stigma of shame or guilt.

4. Assign students to select a quotation from the handout and write a reflection relating it to their own lives. If necessary, prompt individuals with questions. How does it feel to be surrounded with good things but unable to share in the wealth? What does it mean to be stuck in place, unable to make any progress? Can a person feel terribly alone even when surrounded by a crowd? Collect the writings when the students have finished.

5. Have the class read or listen to "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner." Follow with discussion based on the following questions.

    - What is the significance of the sailor's act of shooting the albatross?

      According to legend, killing an albatross is a terrible omen, a violation of some sort. There was no good reason to shoot the albatross, and the result is disaster for the ship and terrible guilt for the sailor.

    - What finally enabled the sailor to return home?

      When he sincerely repented, he received forgiveness.

    - Why, years later, does the sailor continue to tell the story?

      He is prompted to tell of the events involving the albatross when he encounters someone who needs to learn the same lesson the sailor learned—the necessity of right actions, humility, repentance, and forgiveness.

Name:

Coleridge's "Kubla Khan"

Directions: Coleridge was unable to finish "Kubla Khan," but the poem fragment has an uncanny ability to fascinate readers. Read it, and answer the questions.

Kubla Khan
In Xanadu did Kubla Khan
A stately pleasure dome decree:
Where Alph, the sacred river, ran
Through caverns measureless to man
    Down to a sunless sea.
So twice five miles of fertile ground
With walls and towers were girdled round:
And here were gardens bright with sinuous rills,
Where blossomed many an incense-bearing tree;
And here were forests ancient as the hills,
Enfolding sunny spots of greenery.

But oh! that deep romantic chasm which slanted
Down the green hill athwart a cedarn cover!
A savage place! as holy and enchanted
As e'er beneath a waning moon was haunted
By woman wailing for her demon lover!
And from this chasm, with ceaseless turmoil seething,
As if this earth in fast thick pants were breathing,
A mighty fountain momently was forced:
Amid whose swift half-intermitted burst
Huge fragments vaulted like rebounding hail,
Or chaffy grain beneath the thresher's flail:
And 'mid these dancing rocks at once and ever
It flung up momently the sacred river.
Five miles meandering with a mazy motion
Through wood and dale the sacred river ran,
Then reached the caverns measureless to man,
And sank in tumult to a lifeless ocean:
And 'mid this tumult Kubla heard from far
Ancestral voices prophesying war!
    The shadow of the dome of pleasure
    Floated midway on the waves;
    Where was heard the mingled measure
    From the fountain and the caves.
It was a miracle of rare device,
A sunny pleasure dome with caves of ice!
        A damsel with a dulcimer
        In a vision once I saw:
        It was an Abyssinian maid,
        And on her dulcimer she played,
        Singing of Mount Abora.

Name:

Could I revive within me
Her symphony and song,
To such a deep delight 'twould win me,
That with music loud and long,
I would build that dome in air,
That sunny dome! those caves of ice!
And all who heard should see them there,
And all should cry, Beware! Beware!
His flashing eyes, his floating hair!
Weave a circle round him thrice,
And close your eyes with holy dread,
For he on honeydew hath fed,
And drunk the milk of Paradise.

—Samuel Taylor Coleridge

1. What is the mood of the poem? How does it make you feel?

2. Notice that "Kubla Khan" is dreamlike in that it has many images that are not necessarily united to a central thought. We do not know, for example, where each of the described objects is located in relation to the other. They seem to be floating. What other qualities does the poem share with the world of dreams? How does it differ from reality?

3. Why did dreams appeal to poets in the Romantic movement?

Name:

4. What ideas about creativity and re-creation does the poet bring out in the second part of the poem?

5. Many people feel a sinister foreboding in "Kubla Khan." Find words and phrases that might give readers that impression.

6. With what do you associate the flashing eyes and floating hair? Are they normal?

7. Select one image from the poem that you find especially strong or appealing, and explain its effects.

Name:

Quotations from "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner"

Directions: Read the information, and use the questions to respond to the quotations.

"The Rime of the Ancient Mariner," one of Samuel Taylor Coleridge's most famous poems, is a fairly long narrative about an ill-fated ship and a sailor who survived a difficult voyage.

> Water, water everywhere
> Nor any drop to drink.

1. What image do these lines evoke in your imagination?

2. Can you interpret the quotation metaphorically?

> As idle as a painted ship
> Upon a painted ocean.

3. What does the simile suggest?

> A sadder and a wiser man
> He rose the morrow morn.

4. When might these lines aptly be applied to someone?

Name:

Alone, alone, all, all alone,
Alone on a wide wide sea.

5. What do the four commas in the first line contribute? What do the lines stress about the speaker?

Instead of a cross, the Albatross
About my neck was hung.

6. The idiom "an albatross around one's neck" comes from this poem. What does it mean?

7. Based on these five quotations, what do you expect to find in "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner"?

Lesson 11

George Gordon, Lord Byron

Objectives

- To become acquainted with the work of one of the "second-generation" of Romantic poets
- To study the concept of the Byronic hero and to recognize that it grew out of Byron's own experiences

Notes to the Teacher

With *Lyrical Ballads* William Wordsworth and Samuel Taylor Coleridge made an indelible impact on the world of poetry. Of the poets who succeeded them, three are usually considered the best of the second generation of Romantic poets. One of them is George Gordon, Lord Byron.

Byron (1788–1824) was a stormy, sensitive, fiercely proud man. He was the son of an army captain known as Mad Jack Byron. His mother, an emotionally unstable woman, alternately pampered him and taunted him about his one physical imperfection—a clubfoot. Of noble birth, Byron nevertheless lived in near poverty until he reached the age of ten, when he inherited his great-uncle's estate, Newstead Abbey. This inheritance enabled him to attend Trinity College in Cambridge, where he gained a reputation as an accomplished athlete, especially in swimming and boxing. After graduating, he traveled throughout Europe and parts of Asia. He recorded his impressions in a highly fictionalized account in the narrative poem *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*. After publication of the first two cantos of the work, Byron said, "I awoke one morning to find myself famous."

Suddenly he was the darling of high society. Women flung themselves at him, and he was not inclined to turn away. He married and a year later experienced a bitter and scandalous divorce. His excesses were no longer winked at, and the society that had lionized him became his enemy, causing him to leave England and wander across Europe, writing bitter satirical verse. His love for freedom ultimately led him to Greece, where he joined the cause of Greek independence; he died of a fever in a Greek army camp at the age of thirty-six.

Byron's lasting literary legacy is known as the Byronic hero, an idealized portrait of himself. Byronic heroes are mysterious, somewhat exotic men whose passionate intensity cuts them off from others. They suffer from profound yearnings that are beyond the comprehension of lesser persons. Aware of their superiority, Byronic heroes are frequently aloof, sometimes sullen. They show disdain for the regulations of society; they are sometimes imprisoned or become voluntary exiles, living examples of the restless spirit of the Romantics.

In this lesson students first study "She Walks in Beauty," which is nearly always included in high school textbooks and is also readily available on the Internet. They then read and discuss excerpts from *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*.

Procedure

1. Provide a little information about Byron's tempestuous life and early death, and explain that he is generally considered one of the greatest of what is often referred to as the "second generation" of Romantic poets.

2. Read aloud "She Walks in Beauty" and then ask students the following:

   - What is your impression of the woman described in the poem?

     The poem stresses her beauty and mentions both her dark hair and her bright eyes.

   - Describe the circumstances in which he observed the woman.

     It was night, perhaps moonlit or candlelit.

   - Describe the speaker's attitude toward the woman.

     He is full of admiration and extols both her physical beauty and her character. There is no sign of lust in the poem.

   - What is the mood of the poem?

     It is both calm and reverent. Explain that this is not typical of Bryon's moods.

3. Acquaint students with the term *Byronic hero,* and explain that this literary type is largely based on Byron's own life. Provide a list of adjectives describing the Byronic hero:

Rebellious	Nonconformist	Confident
Melancholic	Proud	Independent
Sensitive	Isolated	Mysterious
Passionate	Moody	

4. Distribute **Handout 26,** and have students read the excerpts aloud. Then have small groups complete the exercise by recording marginal notes about the nature of a Byronic hero. Follow with discussion.

   Suggested Responses

   - Canto 1, stanza 5: The Byronic hero often has a secret and even guilt-ridden past; he is a dangerous lover who conforms to no social or moral codes and is totally unrepentant.
   - Canto 1, stanza 6: We see Childe Harold as a moody loner, melancholic but also proud and restless.

- Canto 1, stanza 8: Childe Harold's cheerful countenance masks his deep pain, which he is determined to share with no one. He keeps his own counsel; this is part of his mystery.
- Canto 1, stanza 82: The Byronic hero is a lover with vast experience, but he is also jaded. He realizes that commitment can limit his freedom. The idea of being tied down is repugnant to him.
- Canto 3, stanza 15: The Byronic hero craves freedom above all else; there is nothing worse than being pinned down, unable to wander at will.
- Canto 3, stanza 113: Here we see the proud, rebellious, and alienated hero, refusing to bow to society's strictures.
- Canto 4, stanza 137: The hero is proud, convinced that he is right and that in the end he will exert an influence on the world. He faces the idea of death with equanimity.

5. Provide the following prompt for a writing assignment:

   Byronic heroes can be dangerous and usually think they are above the rules that govern ordinary people; however, men and women alike are often attracted to, not repelled by, Byronic heroes. Why?

6. If students have read *Jane Eyre* or *Wuthering Heights*, they will probably recognize characteristics of the Byronic hero in both Mr. Rochester and Heathcliff. Men like these have charismatic personalities that can be very attractive and compelling. There is nothing boring or ordinary about them. Collect writings as tickets out of class.

Name:

The Byronic Hero in *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*

Directions: In this lengthy narrative poem, George Gordon, Lord Byron, dealt imaginatively with his own travels far away from England. Read the following excerpts, and record marginal notes about characteristics of the Byronic hero in preparation for discussion.

From Childe Harold's Pilgrimage

Canto 1

5

For he through Sin's long labyrinth had run,
Nor made atonement when he did amiss,
Had sighed to many, though he loved but one,
And that loved one, alas, could ne'er be his.
Ah, happy she! to 'scape from him whose kiss
Had been pollution unto aught so chaste;
Who soon had left her charms for vulgar bliss,
And spoiled her goodly lands to gild his waste,
Nor calm domestic peace had ever deigned to taste.

6

And now Childe Harold was sore sick at heart,
And from his fellow bacchanals would flee;
'Tis said, at times the sullen tear would start,
But pride congealed the drop within his e'e:
Apart he stalked in joyless reverie,
And from his native land resolved to go,
And visit scorching climes beyond the sea;
With pleasure drugged, he almost longed for woe,
And e'en for change of scene would seek the shades below.

8

Yet ofttimes in his maddest mirthful mood,
Strange pangs would flash along Childe Harold's brow,
As if the memory of some deadly feud
Or disappointed passion lurked below:
But this none knew, nor haply cared to know;
For his was not that open, artless soul
That feels relief by bidding sorrow flow;
Nor sought he friend to counsel or condole,
Whate'er this grief mote be, which he could not control.

82

Oh! many a time and oft had Harold loved,
Or dreamed he loved, since rapture is a dream;
But now his wayward bosom was unmoved,
For not yet had he drunk of Lethe's stream:
And lately had he learned with truth to deem
Love has no gift so grateful as his wings:
How fair, how young, how soft soe'er he seem,
Full from the fount of joy's delicious springs
Some bitter o'er the flowers its bubbling venom flings.

Canto 3

15

But in Man's dwellings he became a thing
Restless and worn, and stern and wearisome,
Droop'd as a wild-born falcon with clipt wing,
To whom the boundless air alone were home:
Then came his fit again, which to o'ercome,
As eagerly the barr'd-up bird will beat
His breast and beak against his wiry dome
Till the blood tinge his plumage, so the heat
Of his impeded soul would through his bosom eat.

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I have not loved the world, nor the world me;
I have not flattered its rank breath, nor bow'd
To its idolatries a patient knee—
Nor coin'd my cheek to smiles,—nor cried aloud
In worship of an echo: in the crowd
They could not deem me one of such; I stood
Among them, but not of them; in a shroud
Of thoughts which were not their thoughts, and still could,
Had I not filed my mind, which thus itself subdued.

Canto 4

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But I have lived, and have not lived in vain:
My mind may lose its force, my blood its fire,
And my frame perish even in conquering pain;
But there is that within me which shall tire
Torture and Time, and breathe when I expire;
Something unearthly, which they deem not of,
Like the remembered tone of a mute lyre,
Shall on their softened spirits sink, and move
In hearts all rocky now the late remorse of love.

—George Gordon, Lord Byron

Lesson 12

Percy Bysshe Shelley, Idealist

Objectives

- To recognize that the Romantic philosophy idealized personal freedom
- To read and analyze several works by Shelley

Notes to the Teacher

Percy Bysshe Shelley (1792–1822), along with his friend Lord Byron (George Gordon), and John Keats, was one of the stars of the second generation of Romantic poets. His own life exemplifies some of the traits of Romanticism—he was idealistic, melancholic, and rebellious.

He was already a published writer when he matriculated at University College in Oxford, and he gained notoriety by being dismissed for writing and distributing a pamphlet entitled *The Necessity of Atheism*. He was frequently at odds with convention. After three years of marriage, he found that he no longer loved his young wife, Harriet Westbrook; he fell in love with Mary Wollstonecraft Godwin, who shared his ideals and beliefs. Shelley had no qualms about proposing that the three of them live together, an idea that did not appeal to his wife. Shelley loved boats and died when he was swept overboard during a violent storm.

In his verse, Shelley speaks not of the actual but of the ideal. Despite his atheism, he was in many ways the most spiritual of the Romantics. He had a vision of humankind as it might be and fervently believed that when complete liberation had been achieved through universal love and brotherhood, humankind would attain perfection.

In this lesson students first read and discuss the sonnet "Ozymandias." You may find it useful to display some photographs of statues of Egypt's pharaohs. Students then examine "Song to the Men of England."

Procedure

1. Ask students to brainstorm to create a list of antonyms for *freedom*.

Tyranny	Captivity
Bondage	Servitude
Slavery	Limitation
Imprisonment	

   Explain that the Romantic poet Percy Bysshe Shelley is often associated with belief in complete freedom. He was a close friend with George Gordon, Lord Byron, so they knew each other's work.

2. Ask students what draws many people to Egypt as tourists.

   ***Example**: There are many awesome monuments to important people in Egypt's long history, including figures like the pharaoh Ramesses II, who ruled for many years.*

3. Distribute **Handout 27,** and have students complete the exercise.

   Suggested Responses

   1. We hear the voices of the "I," the traveler, and the inscription on the broken-down statue of Ozymandias.
   2. He saw a desert and an old, broken statue of an ancient ruler. Only the legs remained intact, and the head lay in the sand.
   3. Ozymandias seems to have been a powerful ruler; the face of the statue had a sneering expression that suggests cruelty and tyranny.
   4. The inscription reveals hubris and overconfidence. Ozymandias must have seen himself as great and invincible. The inscription means that he was the highest ruler and had more power, achievements, and wealth than anyone could imagine.
   5. The arrogance in the inscription contrasts ironically with the decrepit state of the statue. Ozymandias has been dead for a long time, and all of his great works are ancient history.
   6. Life, power, and achievements are transitory and crumble to nothing with the passage of time. This remains as true today as it was in ancient Egypt.

4. Distribute **Handout 28,** and have students read Shelley's "Song to the Men of England." Draw attention to the fact that Shelley's poem is highly rhetorical and, in fact, reads like a speech, although the title indicates that he saw it as a poem.

   Suggested Responses

   1. In the poem Shelley addresses the working classes, whose toil benefits not themselves so much as wealthy landowners. Shelley himself was not a member of this social class; the poem demonstrates the Romantics' concern for ordinary people.
   2. Worker bees take care of drone bees, whose sole purpose is mating with the queen. In human society the toil of the working class ensures the idleness and luxury of the wealthy.
   3. Shelley wanted to arouse anger leading to action. He did this by questioning the workers' manliness and accusing them of cowardice.
   4. The poem directly addresses the people and includes parallel structures and rhetorical questions. Shelley gives an unflattering picture of the people "shrinking" into their hovels. He compares them to unthinking bees and indirectly accuses them of cowardice. He is deliberately trying to make them angry. The poem asserts that the workers have the ability to remedy the situation. Otherwise, there would be no sense in talking to them at all. Shelley believed that poets could influence the world for good or for evil. He once described poets as "the unacknowledged legislators of the world."

5. Make it clear that in "Ozymandias" and "Song to the Men of England," Shelley's targets are fairly conventional, but that the Romantics were frequently more extreme in their views. William Blake, for example, felt that any kind of restriction was evil and that people should be allowed to rely and act on their instincts. The Romantics were, above all else, idealists.

6. Distribute **Handout 29,** and have students read the poem carefully. Then have them begin drafting the essay, which can be completed as homework.

Name:

A Portrait of Tyranny

Directions: Read Percy Bysshe Shelley's most famous sonnet, and answer the questions.

Ozymandias
I met a traveller from an antique land,
Who said—"Two vast and trunkless legs of stone
Stand in the desert. . . . Near them, on the sand,
Half sunk, a shattered visage lies, whose frown,
And wrinkled lip, and sneer of cold command,
Tell that its sculptor well those passions read
Which yet survive, stamped on these lifeless things,
The hand that mocked them, and the heart that fed;
And on the pedestal, these words appear:
My name is Ozymandias, King of Kings;
Look on my Works, ye Mighty, and despair!
Nothing beside remains. Round the decay
Of that colossal Wreck, boundless and bare
The lone and level sands stretch far away."

—Percy Bysshe Shelley

1. How many voices do you hear in the poem? Who are they?

2. What did the traveler see in the ancient land?

3. What kind of person was Ozymandias? What words in the poem convey his character?

4. What would have prompted Ozymandias to place the inscription on the statue? What does the inscription mean?

5. How does irony function in the poem?

6. What is the poem's theme?

Name:

"Song to the Men of England"

Directions: Read the poem, and answer the questions.

Song to the Men of England
Men of England, wherefore plough
For the lords who lay ye low?
Wherefore weave with toil and care
The rich robes your tyrants wear?

Wherefore feed and clothe and save
From the cradle to the grave
Those ungrateful drones who would
Drain your sweat—nay, drink your blood?

Wherefore, bees of England, forge
Many a weapon, chain, and scourge,
That these stingless drones may spoil
The forced produce of your toil?

Have ye leisure, comfort, calm,
Shelter, food, love's gentle balm?
Or what is it ye buy so dear
With your pain and with your fear?

The seed ye sow, another reaps;
The wealth ye find, another keeps;
The robes ye weave, another wears;
The arms ye forge, another bears.

Sow seed—but let no tyrant reap;
Find wealth—let no imposter heap;
Weave robes—let not the idle wear;
Forge arms—in your defense to bear.

Shrink to your cellars, holes, and cells—
In Halls ye deck another dwells.
Why shake the chains ye wrought? Ye see
The steel ye tempered glance on ye.

With plough and spade and hoe and loom
Trace your grave and build your tomb
And weave your winding-sheet—till fair
England be your Sepulchre.

—Percy Bysshe Shelley

Name:

1. What social class was Shelley addressing in this poem? Was he of that class? What does that tell you about the Romantics' concern for freedom?

2. Why is it appropriate to compare the workers with bees?

3. What are some of the feelings that Shelley is trying to arouse in readers and listeners? How does he go about doing this?

4. What rhetorical qualities does the poem demonstrate?

Name:

Shelley Speaks of Love

Directions: Read the poem carefully. Then write an essay in which you identify the theme and provide textual evidence to support your ideas.

Love's Philosophy
The Fountains mingle with the Rivers
And the Rivers with the Oceans,
The winds of Heaven mix forever
With a sweet emotion;
Nothing in the world is single;
All things by a law divine
In one spirit meet and mingle.
Why not I with thine?—

See the mountains kiss high Heaven
And the waves clasp one another;
No sister-flower would be forgiven
If it disdained its brother,
And the sunlight clasps the earth
And the moonbeams kiss the sea:
What is all this sweet work worth
If thou kiss not me?

—Percy Bysshe Shelley

Lesson 13

Mary Shelley and *Frankenstein*

Objectives

- To recognize *Frankenstein* as an example of a gothic novel
- To make connections between gothic works and Romanticism
- To understand themes in *Frankenstein*

Notes to the Teacher

Mary Shelley (1797–1851), Percy Bysshe Shelley's wife, wrote one of the most famous and enduring novels in literary history. It began as a contest in 1816 when, during the "year without a summer," foul weather threatened to mar a vacation in Switzerland. The daughter of writer William Godwin and early feminist Mary Wollstonecraft, Mary Shelley took the contest seriously, and the result was *Frankenstein.* Students are often surprised to find that the book is far from frivolous; it deals with serious issues regarding science, technology, and responsibility, and it includes allusions to other significant literary works. When Victor Frankenstein attempts to use electricity to create life, he oversteps his own powers; the result is a repulsive creature that Frankenstein absolutely rejects but cannot escape.

Early in the nineteenth century, gothic novels enjoyed considerable popularity. Their Romantic elements include emphases on emotion, imagination, the supernatural, and the unexplainable. Early gothic novels share characteristics such as settings in dark, dank castles or mansions with hidden and secret rooms. Nature usually parallels human actions and experiences, and there is a powerful presence of the macabre. Characters' motivations are complex and often very dark.

If you are teaching the entire novel to your class, this lesson can serve as an introduction. If the novel is not part of your curriculum, the lesson introduces students to one of the most popular and influential novels ever written and demonstrates its connections to Romanticism.

Procedure

1. Explain that the poet Percy Bysshe Shelley drew scathing criticism when he decided to abandon his first marriage because of his attraction to Mary Wollstonecraft, the daughter of a prominent writer and an early feminist. Mary Shelley became the author of a famous novel, *Frankenstein*. Ask students what they know about it. There have been so many spin-offs that most people know that the story has to do with a murderous monster that was created by a human being.

2. Distribute **Handout 30,** and have students read the information and the excerpts from *Frankenstein*. Then ask small groups to discuss the questions.

3. Explain that in the novel the monster created by Dr. Frankenstein feels keenly the experience of rejection by his creator and his isolation from the human community. His resentment and hatred grow to monumental proportions.

4. Conduct a discussion based on the questions on the handout.

Suggested Responses

1. It is the nature of science to try to do what it perceives as possible. No person had ever done this before, so naturally Frankenstein, a determined scientist, wanted to do it.
2. Instead of being happy at his success, Frankenstein is horrified by his creation, especially by its terrible eyes. He leaves the now living body alone and retreats to silence and self-recrimination.
3. The creation is a truly ugly and frightening stranger. People cannot see past his repulsive and threatening appearance.
4. Both Frankenstein and his creation emphasize emotions over thought. The monster speaks of anguish, despair, and feelings of powerlessness; he compares himself to Satan. Frankenstein stresses a nearly paralyzing melancholy.
5. Even the monster experiences nature's restorative power. Frankenstein becomes almost ecstatic at the beauty of the lake and mountains of his home country.
6. This gothic novel demonstrates many aspects of Romanticism. The monster shares some characteristics with the Byronic hero; he is rebellious and full of dark and dangerous emotions. Gothic novels stress emotions, which are central to Romanticism. The Romantics' fascination with the supernatural finds a natural counterpart in the mysteries inherent in gothic fiction.

7. Point out that *Frankenstein* is concerned with the hubris that allows people to think that they have more control than they really do. Dr. Frankenstein succeeds in bringing a dead body to life, but the result is not triumph. Distribute **Handout 31,** and ask students to complete it individually. Follow with free discussion. Then assign students to select one of the topics on the handout and to write an argument for or against the scientific advancement involved. Encourage particular attention to effective endings.

Name:

An Introduction to *Frankenstein*

Directions: Read the information and answer the questions.

In Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*, young Victor Frankenstein goes off to college. Deeply engrossed in his studies, especially in science, he becomes convinced that electricity has the potential to enable human beings to create life. In a stupendous experiment, he brings life to a body assembled from various parts Frankenstein managed to acquire. In chapter 5 Frankenstein describes the experience.

> It was on a dreary night of November that I beheld the accomplishment of my toils. With an anxiety that almost amounted to agony, I collected the instruments of life around me that I might infuse a spark of being into the lifeless thing that lay at my feet. It was already one in the morning; the rain pattered dismally against the panes, and my candle was nearly burnt out, when, by the glimmer of the half-extinguished light, I saw the dull yellow eye of the creature open; it breathed hard, and a convulsive motion agitated its limbs.
>
> How can I describe my emotions at this catastrophe, or how delineate the wretch whom with such infinite pains and care I had endeavoured to form? His limbs were in proportion, and I had selected his features as beautiful. Beautiful!--Great God! His yellow skin scarcely covered the work of muscles and arteries beneath; his hair was of a lustrous black, and flowing; his teeth of a pearly whiteness; but these luxuriances only formed a more horrid contrast with his watery eyes, that seemed almost of the same colour as the dun white sockets in which they were set, his shrivelled complexion and straight black lips.
>
> The different accidents of life are not so changeable as the feelings of human nature. I had worked hard for nearly two years, for the sole purpose of infusing life into an inanimate body. For this I had deprived myself of rest and health. I had desired it with an ardour that far exceeded moderation; but now that I had finished, the beauty of the dream vanished, and breathless horror and disgust filled my heart. Unable to endure the aspect of the being I had created, I rushed out of the room, and continued a long time traversing my bedchamber, unable to compose my mind to sleep.

Rejected by his creator, Frankenstein's creation wanders away but can find nowhere to belong and bitterly resents the rejection he invariably experiences from the moment of his creation. He learns to read and deeply admires the rebellion of Satan in Milton's *Paradise Lost*, and he embarks on a mission to punish Victor Frankenstein. Later, in a conversation with Victor Frankenstein, the monster expresses his rage and frustration.

> "When night came, I quitted my retreat, and wandered in the wood; and now, no longer restrained by the fear of discovery, I gave vent to my anguish in fearful howlings. I was like a wild beast that had broken the toils; destroying the objects that obstructed me, and ranging through the wood with a stag-like swiftness. O! What a miserable night I passed! The cold stars shone in mockery, and the bare trees waved their branches above me: now and then the sweet voice of a bird burst forth amidst the universal stillness. All, save I, were at rest or in enjoyment: I, like the arch-fiend, bore a hell within me; and, finding myself unsympathised with, wished to tear up the trees, spread havoc and destruction around me, and then to have sat down and enjoyed the ruin.
>
> "But this was a luxury of sensation that could not endure; I became fatigued with excess of bodily exertion, and sank on the damp grass in the sick impotence of despair. There was none among the myriads of men that existed who would pity or assist me; and should I feel kindness towards my

Name:

enemies? No: from that moment I declared everlasting war against the species, and, more than all, against him who had formed me, and sent me forth to this insupportable misery.

"The sun rose; I heard the voices of men, and knew that it was impossible to return to my retreat during that day. Accordingly I hid myself in some thick underwood, determining to devote the ensuing hours to reflection on my situation.

"The pleasant sunshine, and the pure air of day, restored me to some degree of tranquility."

In telling his story, Frankenstein describes a trip home to Switzerland after the creation of the monster.

My journey was very melancholy. At first I wished to hurry on, for I longed to console and sympathise with my loved and sorrowing friends; but when I drew near my native town, I slackened my progress. I could hardly sustain the multitude of feelings that crowded into my mind. I passed through scenes familiar to my youth, but which I had not seen for nearly six years. How altered every thing might be during that time! One sudden and desolating change had taken place; but a thousand little circumstances might have by degrees worked other alterations, which, although they were done more tranquilly, might not be the less decisive. Fear overcame me; I dared no advance, dreading a thousand nameless evils that made me tremble, although I was unable to define them.

I remained two days at Lausanne, in this painful state of mind. I contemplated the lake: the waters were placid; all around was calm; and the snowy mountains, 'the palaces of nature,' were not changed. By degrees the calm and heavenly scene restored me, and I continued my journey towards Geneva.

The road ran by the side of the lake, which became narrower as I approached my native town. I discovered more distinctly the black sides of Jura, and the bright summit of Mont Blanc. I wept like a child. "Dear mountains! My own beautiful lake! How do you welcome your wanderer? Your summits are clear; the sky and lake are blue and placid. Is this to prognosticate peace, or to mock at my unhappiness?"

I fear, my friend, that I shall render myself tedious by dwelling on these preliminary circumstances; but they were days of comparative happiness, and I think of them with pleasure. My country, my beloved country! Who but a native can tell the delight I took in again beholding thy streams, thy mountains, and, more than all, thy lovely lake!

Yet, as I drew nearer home, grief and fear again overcame me. Night also closed around; and when I could hardly see the dark mountains, I felt still more gloomily. The picture appeared a vast and dim scene of evil, and I foresaw obscurely that I was destined to become the most wretched of human beings.

Name:

1. What would motivate a young scientist to try to bring the dead to life?

2. How does Frankenstein react to the success of his experiment?

3. Frankenstein's creation is very large and patched together from various people's body parts. Why would people fear and shun him?

4. What role do emotions play in these excerpts?

5. What role does nature play?

6. How do Romanticism and gothic novels relate to each other?

Name:

Scientific Progress and Human Limitations

Directions: *Frankenstein* is much more than a scary horror story. In it Mary Shelley deals with serious issues regarding science and technology. These issues continue to be relevant today. Give your opinion regarding each of the following topics, and explain your reasoning.

1. In 1997 a scientific institute in Scotland announced the birth of Dolly, who was cloned from a cell from an adult sheep. This was the first time a mammal had been successfully cloned. The scientists and technicians involved in the project were immensely proud of their success. Do you think this was an important step forward for humanity?

2. Suppose scientists discovered a potential way to reintroduce dinosaurs as living species. How exciting this would be! People would be able to see how these creatures really look and act instead of relying on guesswork. Should the scientists go ahead with the project?

3. Some people advocate cryonics. The idea is that we could freeze a person or animal that is terminally ill and plan to resuscitate this being at some time in the future when science has come up with a cure. In your opinion, is this a good plan?

4. Technology has enabled us to put satellites into orbit for various purposes. The problem is that Earth now has a lot of "space junk" orbiting it; some pieces are tiny, some huge. As these objects orbit our planet, there is always the danger of collisions, and, as with automobile accidents, one collision can trigger another. Gravity can pull pieces through Earth's atmosphere and send them plunging to the surface, with potentially disastrous results. Have the space agencies around the world overstepped themselves, as Victor Frankenstein did?

5. Despite their desire to have children, some couples find themselves unable to achieve a pregnancy. Doctors today can provide fertility treatments for both men and women. People can try in vitro fertilization and artificial insemination. Some women serve as surrogate mothers. Is this ability to influence human reproduction a good thing?

Lesson 14

Odes by John Keats

Objectives

- To recognize and respond to Keats's masterful uses of imagery
- To read and respond to three of his odes
- To learn characteristics of the ode as a form of poetry

Notes to the Teacher

John Keats (1795–1821) is the third of the most famous second-generation Romantic poets. The son of a stable keeper, Keats was apprenticed to a doctor and had a considerable amount of medical training. He decided instead to become a poet, fell in love with Fanny Brawne, and then discovered his symptoms of tuberculosis, the disease that had earlier killed his mother and brother. A healing trip to Italy did not help, and Keats died in Rome at the age of twenty-five. He wrote his own epitaph: "Here lies one whose name was writ in water."

Despite the brevity of his life and writing career, Keats ranks as one of the greatest of the Romantic poets and is especially renowned for his uses of imagery. This lesson focuses on three of his odes. This type of poem was also popular with Byron and Shelley. The ode, an ancient form reaching back to classical Greece, is a relatively lengthy poem characterized by dignity, formality, and elegance. Odes are usually dedicated to specific objects or entities.

"Ode on a Grecian Urn" is a highly visual poem which presents a speaker carefully examining and thinking about the images on a Greek vase—images frozen in time but also not susceptible to aging processes or death. "Ode to Autumn" is replete with pungent images characteristic of the harvest season of the year. "Ode to a Nightingale" began as Keats sat listening to a nightingale one spring or summer morning. The poems are available in many anthologies and on the Internet. For the first procedure, you will need a folding chair and a comfortable office chair or armchair.

Procedure

1. Place two chairs with contrasting comfort levels in front of the class—for example, a folding chair and an upholstered armchair. Ask students to compare and contrast them.

   ***Example**: A folding chair is a practical and easily portable form of seating; it is usually sleek but not very pretty; it probably becomes uncomfortable if a person sits in it for a long time. The cushioned armchair is much*

more comfortable and visually appealing. In contrast to the folding chair, it qualifies as luxurious, but it is also heavy and difficult to move.

2. Explain that John Keats was a Romantic poet who made brilliant use of imagery to produce poetry that could be classified as luxurious.

3. Indicate that, like the other Romantic poets, Keats wrote different types of poems during his brief lifetime. Among these types is the ode, which was also popular with other Romantic poets.

4. Divide the class into groups, and assign each group one of the following poems:

   "Ode on a Grecian Urn"
   "Ode to Autumn"
   "Ode to a Nightingale"

   Give each group **Handout 32, 33,** or **34.** When students have completed the handouts, have those who worked on the same poems collaborate to present them to the class, including reading the poems aloud and sharing their insights.

Suggested Responses

"Ode on a Grecian Urn"

1. The speaker is addressing the urn, but the visual images also speak to him. The pictures on the vase form a visual ode with the clear theme that, while life is short, art lasts.
2. Despite all of the movement depicted on the vase, the images are stationary. They cannot move and change; the imminent kiss, for example, will never happen.
3. The vase shows men or gods chasing girls, a young man playing a musical instrument, young lovers, and a religious ceremony. These all seem like images from Greek mythology.
4. The paradox lies in the idea that unheard music is sweeter than music we actually hear. This may have to do with the magic and appeal of the unattainable.
5. The happiness comes from the fact of not being subject to age and death. The young people in the images will always remain youthful and beautiful.
6. The ode idealizes beauty and equates it with truth. The poem is an aesthetic statement.

"Ode to Autumn"

1. The poem is filled with images related to autumn, such as "mists and mellow fruitfulness," "the last oozing," and "barred clouds bloom the soft soft-dying day."
2. The images all relate to the fall harvest and are positive; the summer growing season is ending in success.
3. The whimsical personification of fall indicates that the agricultural work is over for this year.

4. The question injects a note of regret and melancholy at the end of summer.
5. The third stanza is dominated by sight and sound images—clouds, cropped fields, and the sounds of insects, sheep, and birds.
6. The poem deals somewhat chronologically with autumn—from the early harvest to the sky moving toward a winter look.

"Ode to a Nightingale"

1. The poem includes numerous images: sight, such as "winding mossy ways"; sound, such as "murmurous haunt of flies"; smell, such as "soft incense"; touch, such as "drowsy numbness"; taste, such as "dewy wine"; and motion, such as "tread thee down."
2. Apostrophe breaks down the barriers between people and nature; it allows us to speak directly to elements of nature.
3. The nightingale seems totally unconnected to the human world of decay and death. Its song seems beautiful and immortal. In Romantic poetry, birds are often symbols of freedom.
4. Keats considers an opiate, wine, poetry, and death, but none of these emerge as acceptable.
5. The poem merges the beautiful and immortal birdsong, many sound devices, and constant awareness of death.
6. Shelley would no doubt approve of this poem, filled as it is with sound and melancholy.

5. Ask students, based on the three poems, how they would describe the characteristics of an ode.

   ***Example**: An ode is a relatively lengthy poem that focuses on a single topic and is written in a formal, dignified style.*

   Explain that in ancient Greece, the ode was an elaborately constructed ceremonial poem, originally performed by a chorus and accompanied by music as part of a solemn dramatic presentation.

6. Ask students what the three odes have in common?

   ***Example**: All emphasize the use of powerful images, especially those that are related to sight and sound. All include references to music, as well as an awareness that everything is transitory.*

7. Explain that the art of poetry involves careful attention to precise word choices. Display "Ode to a Skylark" on a screen, or have students access it on the Internet. Distribute **Handout 35,** and ask small groups to complete the exercise.

Suggested Responses

1. A sense of yearning that is central to the meaning of the poem would be lost if "aches" were changed to "hurts."
2. "Fly" associates the poet with the bird, and gives a sense of the freedom the speaker seeks.
3. "Perilous" has an archaic flavor more appropriate to "faery lands."
4. "Toll" has an ominous tone—it suggests the tolling of funeral bell.
5. "Buried" hints at the hopelessness of ever reviving the sound.
6. The alliteration of the explosive b's in "beaded bubbles" imitates the "popping" of the bubbles.
7. "Eves" continues the onomatopoeia imitating the sound of the flies.
8. "Cease" with its long *e* and soft *s* sounds suggests the peaceful, "easeful" death for which the speaker longs. It is almost a "melting away."

8. Have students write paragraphs describing one of the seasons of the year by focusing on images and using carefully selected word choices to present those images.

Examples: *the flaming leaves of autumn, icicles suspended from eaves, crocuses pushing up through the ground, blazing sunshine*

Name:

"Ode on a Grecian Urn"

Directions: In John Keats's "Ode on a Grecian Urn," the speaker carefully examines and reflects on the images on a Greek vase. Read the poem, and use the following questions to discuss it.

1. Why is the title not "Ode to a Grecian Urn"?

2. What does the speaker stress about all of the images on the vase?

3. What do the images depict?

4. Explain the paradox at the beginning of the second stanza.

5. Why is everything in the third stanza happy?

6. What is the meaning of the poem's closing lines?

Name:

"Ode to Autumn"

Directions: "Ode to Autumn," one of John Keats's most famous poems, uses many images to discuss the season of the year that signals the end of summer and impending winter. Read the poem, and use the following questions to discuss it.

1. Find specific phrases that appeal to the senses of the reader. What unifies those images?

2. Are the images in the first stanza positive or negative? Does the speaker like or dislike autumn?

3. What are the effects of the personification in the second stanza?

4. What is the purpose of the rhetorical question at the beginning of the third stanza?

5. What kinds of images dominate the third stanza?

6. How is the poem as a whole organized?

Name:

"Ode to a Nightingale"

Directions: According to a friend of John Keats, this poem started one morning when the poet sat outside under a plum tree listening to a nightingale. Read the poem, and use the following questions to discuss it.

1. How important are various kinds of images in this poem?

2. Odes frequently employ apostrophe, an address to someone or something from which the speaker does not expect a response. Why were apostrophes especially appealing to the Romantic poets?

3. Why did Keats make the nightingale the subject of this ode? What does the bird seem to represent?

4. What are some of the ways the poet considers entering into the world represented by the nightingale? Do these ways seem acceptable?

5. It has been said that this poem is the perfect blend of beauty and sadness. What factors in it create sadness?

6. Percy Bysshe Shelley once said, "Our sweetest songs are those that tell of saddest thoughts." Apply his statement to this poem.

Name:

John Keats and Careful Word Choices

Directions: Draw a line through the changed word, and write Keats's word choice in its place. Then explain why his word is the better choice. Consider denotation, connotation, and sound.

1. My heart hurts, and a drowsy numbness pains

2. My sense, as though of hemlock I had drunk

3. Away! away! for I will come to thee

4. Of dangerous seas, in faery lands forlorn

5. Forlorn! the very word is like a bell

6. To ring me back from thee to my sole self

7. Up the hillside; and now 'tis hidden deep

8. In the next valley glades

9. With rounded bubbles winking at the brim

10. The murmurous haunt of flies on summer nights

11. To stop upon the midnight with no pain

Lesson 15

Essayists in an Age of Poetry

Objective

- To read and analyze a sample of prose writing from England's Romantic period

Notes to the Teacher

The Romantic period in English literature lasted only through the first third of the nineteenth century, although its influence remains to the present day. This was primarily a time for poetry, but Charles Lamb and William Hazlitt are still noted for their essay writing. Nonfiction played a minor role, but it was not absent.

Charles Lamb (1775–1834) worked as an accountant with the East India Company. He was a lifelong friend of Coleridge, and he admired Wordsworth's definition of the principles of Romanticism. Unlike Wordsworth, though, Lamb took for his topic city life. Lamb also wrote poems and plays, but today he is most well-known for essays written under the pseudonym Elia. His writings range from whimsical interpretations of his view of life to memoirs in which the people are given fictitious names. He was also a voluminous letter-writer.

William Hazlitt (1778–1830), like Lamb, lived much of his life in London, where he worked as a writer and drama critic for *The London Chronicle*. His dour and introspective personality differed greatly from that of Lamb, who had many friends. Both men were well read, however, and both produced writing that has survived the test of time.

For high school students, nonfiction from several centuries ago often seems tedious beyond belief; as with comedy, what is interesting or amusing changes vastly over time. This lesson briefly acquaints students with both Lamb and Hazlitt. Students then read and analyze Hazlitt's "On Going a Journey," which appeared in the January 1822 edition of *The New Monthly Magazine*.

Procedure

1. Explain that the Romantic period in British literature was quite brief and was over by the mid-1830s. Poetry was the most popular form during this time, but people also published other kinds of writing, including nonfiction. Two of these writers were Charles Lamb and William Hazlitt. Lamb made a living as an accountant, but he also wrote essays, poems, and even plays; he used the pen name Elia. His topics range widely, as indicated by several titles: "Dream Children" (a memoir in which people are given pseudonyms), "Confessions of a Drunkard" (a wry commentary

on a problem in Lamb's life) and "A Dissertation on Roast Pig" (whimsical commentary on the origin and art of a favorite culinary dish).

2. Explain that nonfiction writers often displayed characteristics of the Romantic poets and knew them personally. Lamb, for example, was a close friend with Coleridge, and other poets were frequent guests at his home.

3. Introduce William Hazlitt as an important writer who once worked as a portrait painter; one of those portraits shows Charles Lamb as a young man. Explain that Hazlitt earned a living writing for journalistic publications. One piece by him, "On Going a Journey," will serve as an example of nonfiction during the Romantic period.

4. Distribute **Handout 36,** and ask students to read the essay. Follow with whole class discussion.

Suggested Responses

1. The purposes probably included both entertainment and persuasion that traveling alone is the best way to go.
2. The subject matter is taking a trip, in this case a trip that involves a good amount of walking. The formal word choices (e.g., incumbrances, impediments) and the footnoted literary references establish a tone of educated confidence.
3. The literary references demonstrate that Hazlitt was a highly educated person who who intended to produce a scholarly literary work?
4. Hazlitt presented himself as a reflective and perhaps introverted person, someone who liked being alone and out in a natural environment. With fellow travelers he preferred either no conversation or talk about superficial things such as meals. "I go out of town in order to forget the town and all that is in it."
5. When he was alone, he was not distracted from his own perceptions, thoughts, and feelings, which provided company enough.
6. The quotation reflects Romantic idealism in the idea that the essence of going on a journey is to be totally free of all of the demands associated with day-to-day life.
7. Hazlitt said that he wanted to absorb through his senses everything that happened around him, without imposing analysis until later, when he could focus on meanings.
8. Hazlitt clearly shared Wordsworth's view of nature as a source of inspiration and renewal. On a journey, Hazlitt must have resembled a Byronic hero, remote and somewhat mysterious.

5. Explain that Hazlitt's essay is an example of argumentation. Most people planning a journey, especially a vacation journey, think in terms of travelling companions rather than in terms of solitude. Ask students if the essay persuaded them to share Hazlitt's view.

***Example**: Gregarious people would find it difficult to spend a lot of time in solitude absorbing impressions for later thought. It is true, however, that*

traveling with friends or family can tend to limit awareness of details in one's surroundings and, in a sense, amounts to bringing along one's home on the journey.

6. Assign students to write pieces of argumentation in which they take a position that differs from what most people think on a topic that relates to their own lives. Allow a few minutes for the class to brainstorm possible topics, such as taking a year off before attending college, getting a driver's license as soon as possible, or attending church services. Establish dates for peer conferencing and for submission of final pieces.

Name:

William Hazlitt: "On Going a Journey"

Directions: Hazlitt published "On Going a Journey" in the January 1822 edition of *The New Monthly Magazine.* Read the excerpt carefully, and make marginal annotations. Then answer the questions.

On Going a Journey

One of the pleasantest things in the world is going on a journey; but I like to go by myself. I can enjoy society in a room: but out of doors, nature is company enough for me. I am then never less alone than when alone. . . .

I cannot see the wit of walking and talking at the same time. When I am in the country, I wish to vegetate like the country. I am not for criticizing hedgerows and black cattle. I go out of town in order to forget the town and all that is in it. There are those who for this purpose go to watering places, and carry the metropolis with them. I like more elbowroom, and fewer incumbrances. I like solitude, when I give myself up to it, for the sake of solitude; nor do I ask for

> Whom I may whisper, Solitude is sweet.[1]

The soul of a journey is liberty, perfect liberty, to think, feel, do, just as one pleases. We go on a journey chiefly to be free of all impediments and of all inconveniences; to leave ourselves behind, much more to get rid of others. It is because I want a little breathing space to muse on indifferent matters, where Contemplation

> May plume her feathers and let grow her wings,
> That in the various bustle of resort
> Were all too ruffled, and sometimes impaired.[2]

That I absent myself from the town for a while, without feeling at a loss the moment I am left by myself. . . . Give me the clear blue sky over my head, and the green turf beneath my feet, a winding road before me, and a three hours march to dinner—and then to thinking! It is hard if I cannot start some game on these lone heaths. I laugh, I run, I leap, I sing for joy. From the point of yonder rolling cloud, I plunge into my past being, and revel there, as the sunburnt Indian plunges headlong into the wave that wafts him to his native shore. Then long-forgotten things, like "sunken wreck and sunless treasuries,"[3] burst upon my eager sight, and I begin to feel, think, and be myself again. Instead of an awkward silence, broken by attempts at wit or dull commonplaces, mine is that undisturbed silence of the heart which alone is perfect eloquence. No one likes puns, alliterations, antitheses, argument, and analysis better than I do; but I sometimes had rather be without them. "Leave, oh, leave me to my repose!"[4] I have just now other business in hand, which would seem idle to you, but is with me "very stuff o' the conscience."[5] Is not this wild rose sweet without a comment? Does not this daisy leap to my heart set in its coat of emerald? Yet if I were to explain to you the circumstance that has so endeared it to me, you would only smile. Had I not better then keep it to myself, and let it serve me to brood over, from here to yonder craggy point, and from thence onward to the far-distant horizon? I should be bad company all that way, and therefore prefer being alone. I have heard it said that you may, when the moody fit comes on, walk or ride on by yourself, and indulge your reveries. But this looks like a breach of manners, as neglect of others, and you are

1 Cowper, "Retirement."
2 Milton, "Comus."
3 Shakespeare, *Henry V*, Act I, sc. 2.
4 Gray, "Descent of Odin."
5 Shakespeare, *Othello,* Act I, sc. 2.

Name:

thinking all the time that you ought to rejoin your party. "Out upon such half-faced fellowship,"[6] I like to be either entirely to myself, or entirely at the disposal of others: to talk or be silent, to walk or sit still, to be sociable or solitary. . . . I am for the synthetical[7] method on a journey in preference to the analytical. I am content to lay in a stock of ideas then, and to examine and anatomize them afterward. I want to see my vague notions float like the down of the thistle before the breeze, and not to have them entangled in the briars and thorns of controversy. For once, I like to have it all my own way; and this is impossible unless you are alone, or in such company as I do not covet. I have no obligation to argue a point with anyone for twenty miles of measured road, but not for pleasure. If you remark the scent of a bean field crossing the road, perhaps your fellow traveler has no smell. If you point to a distant object, perhaps he is shortsighted, and has to take out his glass to look at it. There is a feeling in the air, a tone in the color of a cloud which hits your fancy, but the effect of which you are unable to account for. There is then no sympathy, but an uneasy craving after it, and a dissatisfaction which pursues you on the way, and in the end probably produces ill-humor. Now I never quarrel with myself, and take all my own conclusions for granted till I find it necessary to defend them against objections. It is not merely that you may not be of accord on the objects and circumstances that present themselves before you—these may recall a number of objects, and lead to associations too delicate and refined to be possibly communicated to others. Yet these I love to cherish, and sometimes still fondly clutch them, when I can escape from the throng to do so. To give way to our feelings before company, seems extravagance or affectation: and on the other hand, to have to unravel this mystery of our being at every turn, and to make others take an equal interest in it (otherwise the end is not answered) is a task to which few are competent. We must "give it an understanding, but no tongue."[8]. . .

. . . I grant, there is one subject on which it is pleasant to talk on a journey: and that is, what one shall have for supper when we get to our inn at night. The open air improves this sort of conversation or friendly altercation, by setting a keener edge on appetite. Every mile of the road heightens the flavor of the viands we expect at the end of it. How fine it is to enter some old town, walled and turreted, just at the approach of nightfall, or to come to some straggling village, with the lights streaming through the surrounding gloom: and then, after inquiring for the best entertainment that the place affords, to "take one's ease at one's inn!"[9] These eventful moments in our lives' history are too precious, too full of solid, heartfelt happiness, to be frittered and dribbled away in imperfect sympathy. I would have them all to myself, and drain them to the last drop: they will do to talk of or to write about afterward. . . .

—William Hazlitt

1. What do you see as Hazlitt's purpose in this essay?

2. How would you describe the subject matter and the tone?

6 Shakespeare, *Part 1, Henry IV,* Act I, sc. 3.
7 synthetical: putting things together, opposite of analytical, taking apart.
8 Shakespeare, *Hamlet,* Act I, sc. 2.
9 Shakespeare, *Part 1, Henry IV,* Act III, sc. 2.

Name:

3. What do the quotations and footnotes show about the author?

4. What aspects of the author's personality are evident in this piece? Provide textual evidence for your answer.

5. "I am never less alone than when alone." What does this paradox mean?

6. "The soul of a journey is liberty." How does the statement reflect Romanticism?

7. "I am for the synthetical method on a journey in preference to the analytical." What does Hazlitt mean?

8. What qualities of Romanticism are evident in the essay?

Lesson 16

Jane Austen's Unique Perspective

Objectives

- To recognize Jane Austen's satire in describing life early in the nineteenth century
- To consider her works as a commentary on Romanticism

Notes to the Teacher

Jane Austen (1775–1817) was the daughter of a clergyman in the Church of England. He also farmed and maintained a school for boys at the family home. She spent her life in much the same social circles as the characters described in her novels. At an early age, she wrote for her family's entertainment. The decade of the 1810s saw her major literary successes, *Sense and Sensibility, Pride and Prejudice, Mansfield Park,* and *Emma*. Her protagonists are young women of a marriageable age who struggle with issues of decorum and emotions and with what today would be called "identity."

Austen's characters show the tension between the demands of social propriety, especially for women, and the appeals of Romanticism, which favored abandon and a certain amount of nonconformity, even wildness. Her characters enjoy contact with nature, and the protagonists' independence of spirit reflects the Romantics' love of freedom. At the same time, Jane Austen was a moderate, and her works satirize the excesses of the Romantic perspective.

A full appreciation of Jane Austen's talent requires immersion in her works in their totality; if possible, you may want to have your class read and discuss *Pride and Prejudice, Sense and Sensibility,* or *Emma*. (Be warned that high school boys sometimes balk at these books.) This lesson can provide a taste of Jane Austen's work, or it can be used as an introduction to one of the novels.

Procedure

1. Ask students what they think life was like for middle-class young people during the first decades of the 1800s.

   ***Example**: School was not the norm for girls; both male and female fashions were very formal compared with attire today; for most girls, the only way to financial security was marriage; dating as practiced today was unknown.*

2. Explain that Jane Austen was a novelist who focused her stories on the middle class from which she came and with whose mores she was very familiar. If you wish, show a few clips from the 2005 movie adaptation of *Pride and Prejudice*.

3. Distribute **Handout 37,** and ask three students to read the excerpt from *Pride and Prejudice* aloud to the rest of the class. You will need a narrator, a Mr. Bennet, and a Mrs. Bennet. Follow with discussion of the questions.

Suggested Responses

1. It seems clear from context that the eagerness for marriage is characteristic not of rich young men but of all of the unattached women around them.
2. The Bennets are a middle-class family with five daughters at or near marriageable age. The parents speak to each other in a fairly formal way. The mother seems very eager to find eligible men for her daughters. The father seems curiously detached and has a teasing manner.
3. It seems as if getting the five girls married will be the focus of the novel, but the title suggests concern with arrogance or self-esteem and preformed attitudes.
4. In this excerpt we see a great deal of dialogue, as well as irony and wit.

4. Distribute **Handout 38** on *Sense and Sensibility,* and ask small groups to complete it individually. Follow with discussion.

Suggested Responses

1. In the novel, the preceding event was the death of the father of John Dashwood, Elinor, and Marianne. The emotional outbursts of both Marianne and Mrs. Dashwood suggest that an event like that has occurred.
2. Mr. John Dashwood is basically self-centered and not very compassionate. He is a proper sort of person, but his marriage has done nothing to make him a better man, as his wife is more narrow-minded and self-centered than he is.
3. Elinor and Marianne have much in common; they are intelligent and capable. Elinor, however, is prudent and makes cool judgments, while Marianne is eager and passionate in everything, with no interest in the moderation her sister exhibits.
4. Jane Austen seems to have seen much to admire in Romantic philosophies, but she also saw that acting only on spontaneous emotions and imaginative possibilities can lead to ruin.

5. Remind students that Jane Austen was part of the gentry, and in her fiction she focuses both humor and satire on people in that same class. Ask students to write satirical paragraphs about some custom or behavior characteristic of people in their own culture. Students should select only one behavior and use exaggeration in portraying and criticizing it.

Name:

The World of *Pride and Prejudice*

Directions: Read the opening paragraphs of Jane Austen's most famous novel, and answer the questions.

It is a truth universally acknowledged, that a single man in possession of a large fortune must be in want of a wife.

However little known the feelings or views of such a man may be on his first entering a neighbourhood, this truth is so well fixed in the minds of the surrounding families, that he is considered the rightful property of someone or other of their daughters.

"My dear Mr. Bennet," said his lady to him one day, "have you heard that Netherfield Park is let at last?"

Mr. Bennet replied that he had not.

"But it is," returned she; "for Mrs. Long has just been here, and she told me all about it."

Mr. Bennet made no answer.

"Do you not want to know who has taken it?" cried his wife impatiently.

"YOU want to tell me, and I have no objection to hearing it."

This was invitation enough.

"Why, my dear, you must know, Mrs. Long says that Netherfield is taken by a young man of large fortune from the north of England; that he came down on Monday in a chaise and four to see the place, and was so much delighted with it, that he agreed with Mr. Morris immediately; that he is to take possession before Michaelmas, and some of his servants are to be in the house by the end of next week."

"What is his name?"

"Bingley."

"Is he married or single?"

"Oh! Single, my dear, to be sure! A single man of large fortune; four or five thousand a year. What a fine thing for our girls!"

"How so? How can it affect them?"

"My dear Mr. Bennet," replied his wife, "how can you be so tiresome! You must know that I am thinking of his marrying one of them."

"Is that his design in settling here?"

"Design! Nonsense, how can you talk so! But it is very likely that he MAY fall in love with one of them, and therefore you must visit him as soon as he comes."

Name:

"I see no occasion for that. You and the girls may go, or you may send them by themselves, which perhaps will be still better, for as you are as handsome as any of them, Mr. Bingley may like you the best of the party."

"My dear, you flatter me. I certainly HAVE had my share of beauty, but I do not pretend to be anything extraordinary now. When a woman has five grown-up daughters, she ought to give over thinking of her own beauty."

"In such cases, a woman has not often much beauty to think of."

"But, my dear, you must indeed go and see Mr. Bingley when he comes into the neighbourhood."

1. Identify the irony in the opening sentence.

2. The paragraphs present the parents of the novel's protagonist, Elizabeth Bennet. What do they reveal about her family?

3. What do the paragraphs suggest will be the main topic of the novel as a whole?

4. What does the excerpt show about Jane Austen's writing style?

Name:

From *Sense and Sensibility*

Directions: The following excerpt from the novel's opening chapter deals with some of the characters. Read the passage, and answer the questions.

> [Mr. John Dashwood] was not an ill-disposed young man, unless to be rather cold hearted and rather selfish is to be ill-disposed: but he was, in general, well respected; for he conducted himself with propriety in the discharge of his ordinary duties. Had he married a more amiable woman, he might have been made still more respectable than he was:—he might even have been made amiable himself; for he was very young when he married, and very fond of his wife. But Mrs. John Dashwood was a strong caricature of himself;—more narrow-minded and selfish. . . .
>
> Elinor, this eldest daughter, whose advice was so effectual, possessed a strength of understanding, and coolness of judgment, which qualified her, though only nineteen, to be the counsellor of her mother, and enabled her frequently to counteract, to the advantage of them all, that eagerness of mind in Mrs. Dashwood which must generally have led to imprudence. She had an excellent heart;—her disposition was affectionate, and her feelings were strong; but she knew how to govern them: it was a knowledge which her mother had yet to learn; and which one of her sisters had resolved never to be taught.
>
> Marianne's abilities were, in many respects, quite equal to Elinor's. She was sensible and clever; but eager in everything: her sorrows, her joys, could have no moderation. She was generous, amiable, interesting: she was everything but prudent. The resemblance between her and her mother was strikingly great.
>
> Elinor saw, with concern, the excess of her sister's sensibility; but by Mrs. Dashwood it was valued and cherished. They encouraged each other now in the violence of their affliction. The agony of grief which overpowered them at first, was voluntarily renewed, was sought for, was created again and again. They gave themselves up wholly to their sorrow, seeking increase of wretchedness in every reflection that could afford it, and resolved against ever admitting consolation in future. Elinor, too, was deeply afflicted; but still she could struggle, she could exert herself. She could consult with her brother, could receive her sister-in-law on her arrival, and treat her with proper attention; and could strive to rouse her mother to similar exertion, and encourage her to similar forbearance.

1. From the characters' responses, what do you think has just occurred?

Name:

2. Describe the character of Mr. John Dashwood.

3. How are Elinor and Marianne like and unlike each other?

4. How does the excerpt connect with the Romantic movement? What view did Jane Austen seem to support?

Lesson 17

The Victorian Period

Objectives

- To understand the massive changes that occurred in England and elsewhere during the Victorian period
- To reflect on attitudes that replaced the Romanticism that dominated the first decades of the 1800s

Notes to the Teacher

Queen Victoria was crowned in 1837 at the age of eighteen and ruled for more than sixty years until her death in 1901. By the end of her reign, she was revered as a symbol of the country as a whole. Much happened to change the world during her reign. In some ways, it was a period of unprecedented achievement. The Industrial Revolution occurred, and progress through human effort became a kind of universal motto. The staggering growth in industry also brought ruthless exploitation of the poorer classes and a transition from agricultural to urban life.

With her husband Prince Albert, Queen Victoria had nine children, most of whom she saw married to royal families in other European countries. This meant that the monarchies were connected through family ties that helped to form natural alliances. By the end of her reign, England possessed a vast empire including parts of Asia and Africa. The situation of the poor at home had been vastly improved, and there was a sense of national esteem and pride.

If the Romantic period was primarily one of poetry, during the Victorian era the novel that earlier had such feeble expression became a dominant form. Novels were often published as serials in monthly magazines, giving ordinary people access to installments from writers such as Charles Dickens. The optimism of the Romantics was largely supplanted by realism and even skepticism. Charles Darwin's new theories of evolution were not conducive to a view of nature as a source of healing and equanimity.

In this lesson, students learn some of the background and history of the decades referred to as the Victorian era, and they learn some of the characteristics of Victorian philosophy and mores.

Procedure

1. Ask students why the period that followed the Romantic era in England is often referred to as the Victorian era.

   ***Answer**: It is named after the queen who reigned from 1837 to 1901.*

2. Distribute **Handout 39,** and assign each topic listed to a student or group of students for research and presentation to the class as a whole.

Suggested Responses

1. Queen Victoria (1819–1901) became the monarch in 1837 at the age of eighteen and ruled until her death. By this time the king or queen had little power but a great deal of influence. She married Prince Albert in 1840 and had nine children. By having her children marry into royalty in other European nations, she established broad international ties. After Prince Albert's death in 1861 the queen went into seclusion, and she dressed in mourning for the rest of her life. It took decades for her to resume regular public duties. Queen Victoria was not always popular, but in the closing decades of her reign she was renowned as a national symbol of England's economic and imperial power.
2. The Great Exhibition of 1851 was a project that originated with Prince Albert. A large building called the Crystal Palace was built in Hyde Park to showcase industrial achievements from around the world. The expo celebrated the achievements of the Industrial Revolution. Millions of visitors attended the exhibition, generating money for projects such as the museums that still attract tourists today.
3. The Great Famine of 1845–1848 occurred in Ireland and originated with a potato blight. Ireland was part of the British Empire and geographically very close, but the English generally felt only disdain for the agricultural Irish most affected by the famine. As a result of the famine, the population of Ireland dropped by about 25 percent, about half due to death and the other half to emigration.
4. The Ten Hours Act of 1847 was an attempt to deal with one of the problems caused by the Industrial Revolution. It limited the time women and children could legally work in factories to ten hours per day and aimed to stem public criticism and protect the health of individuals and families. The act worked against the predominating laissez-faire attitude.
5. Charles Darwin (1809–1882) was a British scientist. In 1831 he joined a five-year expedition that enabled him to observe species in a variety of locations around the world. These observations led to his theory of evolution based on natural selection. The idea is that individuals best adapted to their environment are most likely to survive and pass their genetic traits to later generations. In 1859 Darwin published *On the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection*, a book that became extremely controversial because of its implications regarding traditional views of creation.
6. William Booth (1829–1912) was a British Methodist preacher in London, where he came in contact with the miserable lives of the very poor. He was a revivalist who championed both social reform and religious conversion. He and his wife Catherine started a mission to provide food and shelter for the indigent, and in 1865 it evolved into the Salvation Army, which today is still a visible presence of concern for the poor. His achievement reflects concern for social reform.
7. The Elementary Education Act of 1880 originated with ideas in the Elementary Education Act of 1870. The decade between the two saw the construction of enough new schools that it became possible to make education compulsory. The act worked against excessive child labor and made education compulsory up to the age of thirteen.

8. Charles Dickens (1812–1870) is generally seen as the greatest of the Victorian novelists. He came from a poor family and was mostly self-educated. After beginning as a journalist, he went on to write novels and articles on many subjects, sometimes using the pen name Boz. Many of his works reflect concern for the poor and downtrodden. Among his greatest novels are *Great Expectations*, *A Tale of Two Cities*, and *David Copperfield*. He is also famous for his novella *A Christmas Carol*.
9. Sir George Cayley (1775–1857) was a pioneer in the field of aeronautics who for many years studied the potential of gliders. In 1853 he succeeded in creating a glider that could carry human weight, and the first human flight in an aircraft occurred—a triumph of the industrial age and an omen of many things to come in aviation.
10. The London Tube is an underground transportation system that originated during the Victorian Age. At first people jeered at the very idea as ridiculous, but the result was an engineering marvel under the streets of London that transported and still transports people across the city through tunnels in steam-driven trains. This was one factor in the geographical expansion of the city.

3. Ask the class to summarize the effects of the changes that occurred during Victoria's long reign.

   ***Answer**: The old agriculture-based culture changed forever as science and technology boomed.*

4. Distribute **Handout 40,** and ask students to complete the exercise individually or with partners.

Suggested Responses

1. Charles Kingsley stresses imagery associated with no proper waste disposal and with by-products of industrialization, resulting in extremely unhealthy living situations. The second excerpt depicts men who are virtual prisoners of their work, forced to live in confinement and deprivation.
2. Thomas Carlyle criticizes the difficulties men willing and eager to work had in their efforts to find employment. Men in this society often received less respect and opportunity than horses.
3. Dickens presents the Gypsy children as relatively healthy and free in contrast to the poor London children forced into long days of indoor labor.
4. Here Dickens emphasizes the plight of the orphaned, shifted from place to place, underfed, and easily victimized and exploited.

Name:

Web Quest: The Victorian Era

Directions: The Victorian era was a time of unprecedented change in every area of life. Find information about each of the following topics, and think of connections with our lives today.

Topic	Facts	Connections
1. Queen Victoria		
2. Great Exposition of 1851		
3. Great Famine of 1845–1848		
4. Ten Hours Act of 1847		
5. Charles Darwin		
6. William Booth		
7. Elementary Education Act of 1880		
8. Charles Dickens		
9. George Cayley		
10. The Tube in London		

Name:

Victorian Voices of Protest

Directions: Victorian writers addressed the evil effects of the Industrial Revolution. As you read the excerpts, highlight examples of protest.

1. In the novel *Alton Locke* (1850), Charles Kingsley discloses the misery of living near open sewers in English slums of this period.

> Along the double row of miserable house-backs, which lined the sides of the open tidal ditch—over strange rambling jetties, and balconies, and sleeping sheds, which hung on rotting piles over the black waters, with phosphorescent scraps of rotten fish gleaming and twinkling out of the dark hollows, like devilish gravelights—over bubbles of poisonous gas, and bloated carcasses of dogs, and lumps of offal, floating on the stagnant olive-green hell-broth—over the slow sullen rows of oily ripple which were dying away into the darkness far beyond, sending up, as they stirred, hot breaths of miasma. . . .

In the same novel, Kingsley depicts how some people had to live in quarters provided for them by boss contractors who hired them out to tailoring factories.

> . . . half a dozen men imprisoned in that way, in a little dungeon of a garret, where they had hardly room to stand upright, and only just space to sit and work between their beds, without breathing the fresh air, or seeing God's sun, for months together, with no victuals but a few slices of bread-and-butter, and a little slop of tea, twice a day, till they were starved to the very bone.

2. In his nonfiction prose work *Past and Present* (1843), Thomas Carlyle speculates that it was easier for a horse to work and live in England than it was for a man.

> A man willing to work, and unable to find work, is perhaps the saddest sight that Fortune's inequality exhibits under this. Burns expresses freely what thoughts it gave him: a poor man seeking work; seeking leave to toil that he might be fed and sheltered! That he might be put on a level with the four-footed workers of the Planet which is his! There is not a horse willing to work but can get food and shelter in requital; a thing this two-footed worker has to seek for, to solicit occasionally in vain. He is nobody's two-footed worker; he is not even anybody's slave. And yet, he is a two-footed worker; it is currently reported there is an immortal soul in him, sent down out of Heaven into the Earth; and one beholds him seeking for this! — Nay what will a wise Legislature say, if it turn out that he cannot find it; that the answer to their postulate proposition is not affirmative but negative?

3. In *Nicholas Nickleby* (1838–1839), Charles Dickens contrasts the relative good fortune of vagabond Gypsy children with the plight of the working children of England.

> Even the sunburnt faces of gipsy children, half naked though they be, suggest a drop of comfort. It is a pleasant thing to see that the sun has been there; to know that the air and light are on them every day; to feel that they are children, and lead children's lives; that if their pillows be damp, it is with the dews of Heaven, and not with tears; that the limbs of their girls are free, and that they are not crippled by distortions, imposing an unnatural and horrible penance upon their sex; that their lives are spent, from day to day, at least among the waving trees, and not in the midst of dreadful engines which make young children old before they know what childhood is, and give them the exhaustion and infirmity of age, without, like age, the privilege to die.

Name:

4. In another novel, *Oliver Twist* (1837), Dickens wrote the following:

> For the next eight or ten months, Oliver was the victim of a systematic course of treachery and deception. He was brought up by hand. The hungry and destitute situation of the infant orphan was duly reported by the workhouse authorities to the parish authorities. The parish authorities inquired with dignity of the workhouse authorities, whether there was no female then domiciled in "the house" who was in a situation to impart to Oliver Twist, the consolation and nourishment of which he stood in need. The workhouse authorities replied with humility, that there was not. Upon this the parish authorities magnanimously and humanely resolved, that Oliver should be "farmed," or, in other words, that he should be despatched to a branch-workhouse some three miles off, where twenty or thirty other juvenile offenders against the poor-laws, rolled about the floor all day, without the inconvenience of too much food or too much clothing, under the parental superintendence of an elderly female, who received the culprits at and for the consideration of sevenpence-halfpenny per small head per week. Sevenpence-halfpenny's worth per week is a good round diet for a child; a great deal may be got for sevenpence-halfpenny, quite enough to overload its stomach, and make it uncomfortable. The elderly female was a woman of wisdom and experience; she knew what was good for children; and she had a very accurate perception of what was good for herself.

Lesson 18

Charles Dickens: Social Critic and Master of Caricature

Objectives

- To recognize Dickens's moral stance in portraying his contemporary English culture
- To appreciate his deft caricatures of types of individuals

Notes to the Teacher

Charles Dickens (1812–1870) came from a middle-class family who lived fairly comfortably until debt led to disaster and imprisonment of the entire family except for Charles, who was forced to work as a twelve-year-old and had first-hand acquaintance with the desperate straits of London's poor. Reunited with the family after their release, he had some schooling and eventually embarked on a writing career that made him both wealthy and famous. He was also an avid theater fan and enjoyed performing in plays.

An important ethical doctrine of the time was utilitarianism, which based virtue on usefulness. Proponents of this doctrine believed that conduct should be directed toward promoting the greatest happiness of the greatest number of people. This idea and rebellion against it permeate the literature of the period. The writings also reflect the connections between material prosperity and the exploitation of human beings. Dickens was able to challenge the minds and to move the hearts of Victorians because he could verbalize the differences between their somewhat Romantic ideals and the realities of their environment. His long list of protest novels includes *Oliver Twist* (1837), with its condemnation of workhouses for the poor; *Bleak House* (1853), which deplores the London slums; and *Nicholas Nickleby* (1838–1839), which disapproves of mismanagement in private schools. *Hard Times* (1854) also indicts Victorian industrial society and its utilitarian philosophy.

Dickens is not just revered for his moral stance. He was an accomplished writer with a gift for story lines and deft portrayals of characters. His work was widely read and admired. Many of his books began in serial form in magazines, and entire families waited eagerly for installments.

In this lesson students first consider Dickens's choices of names for characters. They then look at several excerpts from *Hard Times*, certainly not one of Dickens's most popular works today, but one in which social criticism was his main purpose. The excerpts deftly satirize and criticize the school system. Students then examine a passage from *Great Expectations* (1860) that describes Miss Havisham.

Procedure

1. If students are unacquainted with Dickens, provide a little information about his background and explain that during his time he was the most popular writer in England. Point out that Dickens paid close attention to characters' names. Share the following examples, and ask students what the names suggest.
    - Mr. M'Choakumchild (a teacher in *Hard Times*—the name says it all)
    - Mr. Slurk (in *The Pickwick Papers;* sounds devious and creepy)
    - Martin Chuzzlewit (suggests he is somewhat of a dimwit)
    - Nicholas Nickleby (hard to take seriously before one even opens the book)
    - Ebeneezer Scrooge (a really harsh name from *A Christmas Carol* that has come to stand for someone antithetical to joy)
    - Mr. Pumblechook (*Great Expectations;* sounds clumsy and disorganized)
2. Explain that in *Hard Times* Dickens the social critic was at work showing negative effects of industrialization in a fictional English city named Coketown. One of his targets was the educational system. Distribute **Handout 41,** and have students read the excerpts. Then conduct a discussion based on the questions.

    Suggested Responses

    1. The paragraph refers to the students as "little pitchers," depersonalizing them and presenting them as small, empty vessels that need to be filled with facts.
    2. Gradgrind is a "cannon" and a "galvanizing apparatus," both industrial terms, suggesting the goal of turning the children into adults capable of filling slots in the economic framework of Victorian England.
    3. The adults refer to the children by numbers and abhor the use of nicknames. Again the philosophy at work is to depersonalize the children.
    4. Gradgrind thinks only in terms of facts, and Sissy's reference to imagination is not within his sphere of thought.
    5. "Fancy" here signifies imagination and creativity—faculties beyond fact retention.
    6. Sissy sees through the general facts to specific applications, but the teacher M'Choakumchild wants no part of that.
    7. Most systems taken to extremes tend to depersonalize participants. Statistics can lead people to overlook individual needs.

3. Ask students to define the term "caricature."

    ***Answer**: A caricature is a drawing or verbal portrait that uses extreme exaggeration to make a point.*

Distribute **Handout 42,** and have small groups complete the activity.

Suggested Responses

1. Pip uses the superlative adjective *strangest,* but it is certainly an understatement in the case of Miss Havisham.
2. Miss Havisham seems to have remained for a very long time nearly but not completely dressed for a wedding. For her, time stopped at a point in the past. She seems macabre, weird, demented.
3. There is something creepy and scary about all three figures. People feel compelled to look, but what they see is disquieting.
4. It is unlikely that in real life a person could do what Miss Havisham has done. The image of her in her decaying bridal attire is an effective exaggeration; one could describe it as grotesque.

4. Point out that Pip begins his description of Miss Havisham by stating that she was the strangest woman he had ever seen. Assign students to write descriptive pieces about the strangest man, woman, boy, girl, or child they have ever seen. Emphasize that, like Pip, they should use specific images to communicate the individual's strangeness. Direct students to give their subjects fictional names.

Name:

Dickens and the Educational System

Directions: In chapter 2 of *Hard Times*, which Charles Dickens aptly named "Murdering the Innocents," readers meet one of the main characters, Thomas Gradgrind, as he shows the schoolmaster how to teach a lesson. Read the excerpt and answer the questions that follow.

> Thomas Grandgrind, sir. A man of realities. A man of facts and calculations. A man who proceeds upon the principle that two and two are four, and nothing over, and who is not to be talked into allowing for anything over. Thomas Gradgrind, sir—peremptorily Thomas—Thomas Gradgrind. With a rule and a pair of scales, and the multiplication table always in his pocket, sir, ready to weigh and measure any parcel of human nature, and tell you exactly what it comes to. It is a mere question of figures, a case of simple arithmetic. You might hope to get some other nonsensical belief into the head of George Gradgrind, or Augustus Gradgrind, or John Gradgrind—no, sir!
>
> In such terms Mr. Gradgrind always mentally introduced himself, whether to his private circle of acquaintance, or to the public in general. In such terms, no doubt, substituting the words "boys and girls" for "sir," Thomas Gradgrind now presented Thomas Gradgrind to the little pitchers before him, who were to be filled so full of facts.
>
> Indeed, as he eagerly sparkled at them from the cellarage before mentioned, he seemed a kind of cannon loaded to the muzzle with facts, and prepared to blow them clean out of the regions of childhood at one discharge. He seemed a galvanizing apparatus, too, charged with a grim mechanical substitute for the tender young imaginations that were to be stormed away.
>
> "Girl number twenty," said Mr. Gradgrind, squarely pointing with his square forefinger, "I don't know that girl. Who is that girl?"
>
> "Sissy Jupe, sir," explained number twenty, blushing, standing up, and curtseying.
>
> "Sissy is not a name," said Mr. Gradgrind. "Don't call yourself Sissy. Call yourself Cecilia."

The kind of education that Sissy is subjected to becomes farcical in its insistence on everything in life conforming to facts. To begin this lesson, Gradgrind asks the class a question:

> "Suppose you were going to carpet a room. Would you use a carpet having a representation of flowers upon it?"
>
> There being a general conviction by this time that "No, sir!" was always the right answer to this gentleman, the chorus of No was very strong. Only a few feeble stragglers said Yes; among them Sissy Jupe.
>
> "Girl number twenty," said the gentleman, smiling in the calm strength of knowledge. Sissy blushed, and stood up.
>
> "So you would carpet your room—or your husband's room, if you were a grown woman, and had a husband—with representations of flowers, would you," said the gentleman. "Why would you?"
>
> "If you please, sir, I am very fond of flowers," returned the girl.
>
> "And is that why you would put tables and chairs upon them, and have people walking over them with heavy boots?"

Name:

"It wouldn't hurt them, sir. They wouldn't crush and wither if you please, sir. They would be the pictures of what was very pretty and pleasant, and I would fancy—"

"Ay, ay, ay! But you mustn't fancy," cried the gentleman, quite elated by coming so happily to his point. "That's it! You are never to fancy."

"You are not, Cecilia Jupe," Thomas Gradgrind solemnly repeated, "to do anything of that kind."

"Fact, fact, fact!" said the gentleman. And "Fact, fact, fact!" repeated Thomas Gradgrind.

. . . "You must discard the word Fancy altogether. You have nothing to do with it. You are not to have, in any object of use or ornament, what would be a contradiction in fact. You don't walk upon flowers in fact; you cannot be allowed to walk upon flowers in carpets. You don't find that foreign birds and butterflies come and perch upon your crockery; you cannot be permitted to paint foreign birds and butterflies upon your crockery."

Later in the novel, we hear Sissy confiding in her friend, Louisa, that she has fairly frustrated her teacher by her inability to think according to facts.

"I am almost ashamed," said Sissy, with reluctance. "But to-day, for instance, Mr. M'Choakumchild was explaining to us about Natural Prosperity."

"National, I think it must have been," observed Louisa.

"Yes, it was.—But isn't it the same?" she timidly asked.

"You had better say, National, as he said so," returned Louisa, with her dry reserve.

"National Prosperity. And he said, Now, this schoolroom is a Nation. And in this nation, there are fifty millions of money. Isn't this a prosperous nation? Girl number twenty, isn't this a prosperous nation, and an't you in a thriving state?"

"What did you say?" asked Louisa.

"Miss Louisa, I said I didn't know. I thought I couldn't know whether it was a prosperous nation or not, and whether I was in a thriving state or not, unless I knew who had got the money, and whether any of it was mine. But that had nothing to do with it. It was not in the figures at all," said Sissy, wiping her eyes.

"That was a great mistake of yours," observed Louisa.

"Yes, Miss Louisa, I know it was, now. Then Mr. M'Choakumchild said he would try me again. And he said, This schoolroom is an immense town, and in it there are a million of inhabitants, and only five-and-twenty are starved to death in the streets, in the course of a year. What is your remark on that proportion? And my remark was—for I couldn't think of a better one—that I thought it must be just as hard upon those who were starved, whether the others were a million, or a million million. And that was wrong, too."

"Of course it was."

"Then Mr. M'Choakumchild said he would try me once more. And he said, Here are the stutterings—"

Name:

"Statistics," said Louisa.

Sissy's formal education finally comes to an end in the following passage:

"I fear, Jupe," said Mr. Gradgrind, "that your continuance at the school any longer would be useless."

"I am afraid it would, Sir," Sissy answered with a curtsey.

"I cannot disguise from you, Jupe," said Mr. Gradgrind, knitting his brow, "that the result of your probation there has disappointed me; has greatly disappointed me. You have not acquired, under Mr. and Mrs. M'Choakumchild, anything like that amount of exact knowledge which I looked for. You are extremely deficient in your facts. Your acquaintance with figures is very limited. You are altogether backward, and below the mark."

"I am sorry, Sir," she returned; "but I know it is quite true. Yet I have tried hard, Sir."

"Yes," said Mr. Gradgrind, "yes, I believe you have tried hard; I have observed you, and I can find no fault in that respect."

"Thank you, Sir. I have thought sometimes;" Sissy very timid here; "that perhaps I tried to learn too much, and that if I had asked to be allowed to try a little less, I might have—"

"No, Jupe, no," said Mr. Gradgrind, shaking his head in his profoundest and most eminently practical way. "No. The course you pursued, you pursued according to the system—the system—and there is no more to be said about it. I can only suppose that the circumstances of your early life were too unfavourable to the development of your reasoning powers, and that we began too late. Still, as I have said already, I am disappointed."

1. In paragraph two, what image does Dickens use to describe the pupils? How does this reflect Gradgrind's attitude toward them?

2. In paragraph three, what image does Dickens use to describe Gradgrind? How does this reflect Dickens's attitude toward this type of teaching?

Name:

3. By what method do the adults identify and address the children in the classroom? What does that tell you about the philosophy of the school?

4. How does the section on flowers in carpets become nonsensical? Can you think of another example of how reliance on facts can actually distort truth or reality?

5. What would be another word for *fancy* as it is used here?

6. What is the purpose of the passage about economy?

7. In what ways do people sometimes feel like Sissy as they move through the educational system?

Name:

A Portrait of Miss Havisham

Directions: In chapter 8 of *Great Expectations*, the narrator, Pip, describes his first meeting with a woman named Miss Havisham. Read the description, and answer the questions.

> In an armchair, with an elbow resting on the table and her head leaning on that hand, sat the strangest lady I have ever seen, or shall ever see.
>
> She was dressed in rich materials—satins, and lace, and silks—all of white. Her shoes were white. And she had a long white veil dependent from her hair, and she had bridal flowers in her hair, but her hair was white. Some bright jewels sparkled on her neck and on her hands, and some other jewels lay sparkling on the table. Dresses, less splendid than the dress she wore, and half-packed trunks, were scattered about. She had not quite finished dressing for she had but one shoe on—the other was on the table near her hand—her veil was but half arranged, her watch and chain were not put on, and some lace for her bosom lay with those trinkets, and with her handkerchief, and gloves, and some flowers, and a prayer-book, all confusedly heaped about the looking-glass.
>
> It was not in the first few moments that I saw all these things, though I saw more of them in the first moments than might be supposed. But, I saw that everything within my view which ought to be white, had been white long ago, and had lost its lustre, and was faded and yellow. I saw that the bride within the bridal dress had withered like the dress, and like the flowers, and had no brightness left but the brightness of her sunken eyes. I saw that the dress had been put upon the rounded figure of a young woman, and that the figure upon which it now hung loose, had shrunk to skin and bone. Once, I had been taken to see some ghastly waxwork at the Fair, representing I know not what impossible personage lying in state. Once, I had been taken to one of our old marsh churches to see a skeleton in the ashes of a rich dress, that had been dug out of a vault under the church pavement. Now, waxwork and skeleton seemed to have dark eyes that moved and looked at me. I should have cried out, if I could.

1. What is the first adjective Pip uses to describe Miss Havisham? What does the rest of the excerpt reveal about that word choice?

2. What words would you use to describe Miss Havisham? Why?

3. Why does Pip refer to the wax figure and to the skeleton?

4. How does the passage demonstrate Dickens's excellence with caricature?

Lesson 19

The Brontë Sisters

Objectives

- To appreciate the achievements of Emily and Charlotte Brontë
- To recognize the Byronic hero in their novels

Notes to the Teacher

While Charles Dickens enjoyed popularity and fame, the Brontës lived in Haworth, a village in the Yorkshire moors, and led quiet lives dominated by family and writing. Charlotte Brontë (1816–1855) published *Jane Eyre* in 1847, and it was a best-seller. Emily Brontë (1818–1848) published *Wuthering Heights* in 1847, but it was not a success; readers and critics did not know what to make of it. It took decades for critics to appreciate the artistry and depth of the work. Both books are today considered classics and have in some respects eclipsed Charles Dickens's works.

Both Charlotte and Emily Brontë published under pseudonyms, as did their sister Anne, who was also a novelist. Their pseudonyms were designed to mask their gender and prevent the assumption that the works were written only for a female audience that would favor fiction focused on the domestic arena. Both *Jane Eyre* and *Wuthering Heights* present the domestic scene, but they also transcend it. Both books also include variations of the Byronic hero.

The novels are very teachable and can also be assigned as independent reading. This lesson is designed to give students a taste of the work of these influential early Victorian novelists.

Procedure

1. Explain that often classics are not recognized as great works until long after publication, and sometimes books that receive initial rave reviews disappear into obscurity in a few years. Two classics from early in the Victoria period are *Jane Eyre* and *Wuthering Heights*, which were written by sisters, the daughters of a clergyman in the Church of England. The family lived in a small village in the Yorkshire moors.

2. Distribute **Handout 43,** and ask students to complete the exercise.

Suggested Responses

1. Jane is aware of the man as a gentleman and addresses him as "sir."
2. Jane is formally polite, but also independent and assertive. She has a sense of responsibility. She has had little experience with men and admits that she has never conversed with a man she could describe as handsome. There is something feisty but proper about her.

3. There is an atmosphere of mystery about the man, who is somewhat gruff and not prone to want or need assistance from anyone. Much of *Jane Eyre* reflects characteristics of the gothic novel, which is Romantic in its very nature.

3. Distribute **Handout 44,** and ask students to complete the exercise.

Suggested Responses

1. The other characters are delighted to see Cathy beautifully dressed and behaving like a young lady, not like a "tomboy." She is pleased with herself, too.
2. Both Cathy and Heathcliff exude pride. She is somewhat vain, and he is certainly stubborn.
3. The passage demonstrates class consciousness in action. Cathy is supposed to be a lady; Heathcliff is separated out as a servant, not as part of the family into which he was adopted as a young child.

4. Distribute **Handout 45,** and ask students to read the information. Point out applications to the Brontë novels.

***Example**: Jane is a governess because she is a single woman who has to make her own living, and there were few ways for a nineteenth-century English woman to do that. The gentleman who fell off his horse is from a much higher social class, so they would not be seen as appropriate love interests for each other. Young Cathy, to be upwardly mobile, has to be a cultivated lady; Heathcliff, who looks like a peasant, would be an entirely unsuitable husband for her.*

5. Ask students to write short essays about the extent to which they think Victorian mores do or should prevail today.

Name:

Meet Jane Eyre

Directions: Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* presents a protagonist who represents ideals of the Victorian period as well as remnants of the Romantic spirit. An orphan who was raised by an aunt until being sent off to boarding school, Jane obtains a post as a governess at a place called Thornfield Hall. Read the excerpt from chapter 12, and answer the questions. Jane has been out walking alone in the late afternoon, and a strange man on horseback has had an accident.

> "If you are hurt, and want help, sir, I can fetch someone either from Thornfield Hall or from Hay."
>
> "Thank you: I shall do: I have no broken bones,—only a sprain;" and again he stood up and tried his foot, but the result extorted an involuntary "Ugh!"
>
> Something of daylight still lingered, and the moon was waxing bright: I could see him plainly. His figure was enveloped in a riding cloak, fur collared and steel clasped; its details were not apparent, but I traced the general points of middle height and considerable breadth of chest. He had a dark face, with stern features and a heavy brow; his eyes and gathered eyebrows looked ireful and thwarted just now; he was past youth, but had not reached middle-age; perhaps he might be thirty-five. I felt no fear of him, and but little shyness. Had he been a handsome, heroic-looking young gentleman, I should not have dared to stand thus questioning him against his will, and offering my services unasked. I had hardly ever seen a handsome youth; never in my life spoken to one. I had a theoretical reverence and homage for beauty, elegance, gallantry, fascination; but had I met those qualities incarnate in masculine shape, I should have known instinctively that they neither had nor could have sympathy with anything in me, and should have shunned them as one would fire, lightning, or anything else that is bright but antipathetic.
>
> If even this stranger had smiled and been good-humoured to me when I addressed him; if he had put off my offer of assistance gaily and with thanks, I should have gone on my way and not felt any vocation to renew inquiries: but the frown, the roughness of the traveller, set me at my ease: I retained my station when he waved to me to go, and announced—
>
> "I cannot think of leaving you, sir, at so late an hour, in this solitary lane, till I see you are fit to mount your horse."

1. The Victorians were a very class-conscious society. How does the passage evidence this?

2. What personal qualities does the excerpt show about Jane Eyre?

3. What evidence of Romanticism lingers in the passage?

Name:

A Peek into Wuthering Heights

Directions: In *Wuthering Heights*, one of the main characters, Catherine Earnshaw, stays at a neighbor's house to recover from a dog bite and returns home much changed. Years later a servant, Mrs. Dean, describes the event to a visitor. Read the excerpt, and answer the questions.

Cathy stayed at Thrushcross Grange five weeks: till Christmas. By that time her ankle was thoroughly cured, and her manners much improved. The mistress visited her often in the interval, and commenced her plan of reform by trying to raise her self-respect with fine clothes and flattery, which she took readily; so that, instead of a wild, hatless little savage jumping into the house, and rushing to squeeze us all breathless, there 'lighted from a handsome black pony a very dignified person, with brown ringlets falling from the cover of a feathered beaver, and a long cloth habit, which she was obliged to hold up with both hands that she might sail in. Hindley lifted her from her horse, exclaiming delightedly, "Why, Cathy, you are quite a beauty! I should scarcely have known you: you look like a lady now. Isabella Linton is not to be compared with her, is she, Frances?" "Isabella has not her natural advantages," replied his wife: "but she must mind and not grow wild again here. Ellen, help Miss Catherine off with her things—Stay, dear, you will disarrange your curls—let me untie your hat."

I removed the habit, and there shone forth beneath a grand plaid silk frock, white trousers, and burnished shoes; and, while her eyes sparkled joyfully when the dogs came bounding up to welcome her, she dared hardly touch them lest they should fawn upon her splendid garments. She kissed me gently: I was all flour making the Christmas cake, and it would not have done to give me a hug; and then she looked round for Heathcliff. Mr. and Mrs. Earnshaw watched anxiously their meeting; thinking it would enable them to judge, in some measure, what grounds they had for hoping to succeed in separating the two friends.

Heathcliff was hard to discover, at first. If he were careless, and uncared for, before Catherine's absence, he had been ten times more so since. Nobody but I even did him the kindness to call him a dirty boy, and bid him wash himself, once a week; and children of his age seldom have a natural pleasure in soap and water. Therefore, not to mention his clothes, which had seen three months' service in mire and dust, and his thick uncombed hair, the surface of his face and hands was dismally beclouded. He might well skulk behind the settle, on beholding such a bright, graceful damsel enter the house, instead of a rough-headed counterpart of himself, as he expected. "Is Heathcliff not here?" she demanded, pulling off her gloves, and displaying fingers wonderfully whitened with doing nothing and staying indoors.

"Heathcliff, you may come forward," cried Mr. Hindley, enjoying his discomfiture, and gratified to see what a forbidding young blackguard he would be compelled to present himself. "You may come and wish Miss Catherine welcome, like the other servants."

Cathy, catching a glimpse of her friend in his concealment, flew to embrace him; she bestowed seven or eight kisses on his cheek within the second, and then stopped, and drawing back, burst into a laugh, exclaiming, "Why, how very black and cross you look! and how—how funny and grim! But that's because I'm used to Edgar and Isabella Linton. Well, Heathcliff, have you forgotten me?"

She had some reason to put the question, for shame and pride threw double gloom over his countenance, and kept him immovable.

Name:

"Shake hands, Heathcliff," said Mr. Earnshaw, condescendingly; "once in a way, that is permitted."

"I shall not," replied the boy, finding his tongue at last; "I shall not stand to be laughed at. I shall not bear it!" And he would have broken from the circle, but Miss Cathy seized him again.

"I did not mean to laugh at you," she said; "I could not hinder myself: Heathcliff, shake hands at least! What are you sulky for? It was only that you looked odd. If you wash your face and brush your hair, it will be all right: but you are so dirty!"

1. Explain the other characters' responses to Cathy's appearance when she returns home. How do they reflect Victorian mores?

2. What seem to be Cathy's and Heathcliff's main personality traits?

3. How is class consciousness evident in the passage?

Name:

Men and Women in Victorian England

Directions: Read the information, and write a paragraph in which you discuss the extent to which Victorian norms prevail today.

1. Today when we hear the word *Victorian* we tend to think of prim and proper women with high necklines, men in suits, and heavy furniture. There is some validity to these images; however, they vastly over simplify the reality.
2. What was expected of men and women varied somewhat depending on social class. The emphasis on propriety that we associate with Victorianism existed mostly among the middle class and the lesser nobility. Among the lower classes, fewer restrictions were placed on young men and women in their interactions.
3. The general expectation among members of the upwardly mobile middle class was that women naturally had very low sex drives and that young women would remain completely chaste before marriage. The same expectation was not applied to young men.
4. Middle-class parents often had aspirations that their children, especially their daughters, would marry up into higher incomes or even into the lesser nobility. Marrying down was considered a social stigma.
5. Young men in the upper classes were first educated at home and then sent to boarding school and university. The education of young women, when it existed at all, aimed to prepare them for domestic and social life.
6. The business world was seen as the arena for men; women's proper arena was the home, which was viewed as a place of respite from the stresses of the work world.
7. When a woman married, her property became her husband's property; children were seen as the husband's possessions.
8. The high necklines that we associate with Victorian dress were characteristic of daytime attire; evening dress could drop the neckline quite a few inches.
9. Women in the middle and upper classes who were caught in adultery experienced ostracism and public shame; the same did not apply to men. In the cities there was a thriving prostitution business.
10. Homosexuality was a crime punishable with imprisonment or even capital punishment, although the later was seldom or never imposed.

Lesson 20

Scientific Writing: Charles Darwin

Objectives

- To read and analyze scientific prose by Charles Darwin
- To recognize the revolutionary and controversial nature of his ideas

Notes to the Teacher

The Victorian era was a period of rapid change in almost every area of life. This was an age rife with topics for argument on all kinds of subjects, including the role of women, the decline of religion, economics, and the value and danger of industrialization. Famous essayists include Thomas Carlyle, Matthew Arnold, John Ruskin, and John Stuart Mill—all of interest to scholars, but all beyond the interest and educational background of many high school students.

During Charles Darwin's time most people in his culture took for granted a literal interpretation of the creation story in the Book of Genesis. His observations as a naturalist and scientist led to the conclusion that members of a species who are best adapted to their environment survive, while those that are ill-adapted do not, a theory that is often referred to as "survival of the fittest." Species evolve in ways that improve adaptation to the environment; this suggests that human beings evolved from other animal forms and were not simply created on the sixth day, an idea that evoked heated argument at the time and even sometimes today.

Darwin is often neglected in English classes; this is unfortunate, as his nonfiction writings are among the most influential pieces ever created by an author in any genre. In this lesson students read and analyze his introduction to *On the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection*.

Procedure

1. Explain that there are many ways to describe the Victorian era; one is to see it as an age of rapid and unprecedented social change because of industrial development. This created an atmosphere for argument and discussion of many topics, and nonfiction was as important as or more important than other forms of writing.

2. Ask students what is meant by the phrase "survival of the fittest." Lead them to see that it is not just about predators and prey; it means that the animals and plants that are best suited to their environment are the ones that will survive and thrive. This idea originated with the observations and writing of two Victorians, Herbert Spencer (who coined the phrase

"survival of the fittest") and Charles Darwin, who refined Spencer's concept with the theory of natural selection.

3. Distribute **Handout 46,** and have students read Darwin's introduction to his landmark book, *On the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection*. Ask them to underline key phrases and to make marginal annotations.

4. Use the questions on the handout for large group discussion.

Suggested Responses

1. The mystery of mysteries is how everything got here. Attempts to answer the question led to creation stories from ancient cultures. The issue still causes amazement. How did polar bears come to be in the Arctic, elephants in Africa and India, and buffalo in the American Great Plains? How did people, with all their diverse characteristics, get here?
2. Darwin provided some of his background and stressed the amount of time he spent on the topic at hand. He also indicated that he was conversant with others studying the same topic.
3. Readers who had always believed the creation story in the Book of Genesis would have found the sentence startling and maybe even threatening. If God did not create things in the space of six days, what about all of the other beliefs that hinge on scripture? For many the idea of evolution seemed to threaten traditional religious beliefs. This could have aroused defensive reactions of anger and hostility.
4. The woodpeckers and mistletoe are examples of animals and plants remarkably well-suited to their environment; they also demonstrate that species are interconnected.
5. Numbers cause the struggle for existence. The environment can support only a limited number of creatures; therefore, the creatures must compete to survive. In this competition the strongest, smartest, or most well adapted win. Think in terms of the number of eggs laid by fish in a small lake or pond. If all of those eggs matured into adult fish, there would be no room to swim, and everything in the lake or pond would have to die.
6. Darwin's tone is sincere but not arrogant. He was convinced of the viability of his theory, and he seems to have been patient with readers. There is also humility; he does not hesitate to admit that there is much that we probably can never know.

5. Ask students to write essays in which they apply Darwin's ideas about the struggle for survival and natural selection to life today. If necessary, clarify that they can think in terms of flora and fauna, their own contemporaries, political campaigns, or economics. In all of those arenas we see patterns discussed by Darwin. Set a day for peer conferencing and a deadline for submission of final papers.

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Ideas from Charles Darwin

Direction: Below you will find Darwin's introduction to *On the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection*. Read it carefully, make marginal annotations, and answer the questions.

When on board H.M.S. *Beagle* as naturalist, I was much struck with certain facts in the distribution of the organic beings inhabiting South America, and in the geological relations of the present to the past inhabitants of that continent. These facts, as will be seen in the latter chapters of this volume, seemed to throw some light on the origin of species—that mystery of mysteries, as it has been called by one of our greatest philosophers. On my return home, it occurred to me in 1837 that something might perhaps be made out on this question by patiently accumulating and reflecting on all sorts of facts which could possibly have any bearing on it. After five years' work I allowed myself to speculate on the subject, and drew up some short notes; these I enlarged in 1844 into a sketch of the conclusions, which then seemed to me probable: from that period to the present day I have steadily pursued the same object. I hope that I may be excused for entering on these personal details, as I give them to show that I have not been hasty in coming to a decision.

My work is now [1859] nearly finished; but as it will take me many more years to complete it, and as my health is far from strong, I have been urged to publish this abstract. I have more especially been induced to do this, as Mr. [Russel] Wallace, who is now studying the natural history of the Malay Archipelago, has arrived at almost exactly the same general conclusions that I have on the origin of species. . . .

This abstract, which I now publish, must necessarily be imperfect. I cannot here give references and authorities for my several statements; and I must trust to the reader reposing some confidence in my accuracy. No doubt errors will have crept in, though I hope I have always been cautious in trusting to good authorities alone. I can here give only the general conclusions at which I have arrived, with a few facts in illustration, but which, I hope, in most cases will suffice. No one can feel more sensible than I do of the necessity of hereafter publishing in detail all the facts, with references, on which my conclusions have been grounded; and I hope in a future work to do this. For I am well aware that scarcely a single point is discussed in this volume on which facts cannot be adduced, often apparently leading to conclusions directly opposite to those at which I have arrived. A fair result can be obtained only by fully stating and balancing the facts and arguments on both sides of each question; and this is here impossible.

I much regret that want of space prevents my having the satisfaction of acknowledging the generous assistance which I have received from very many naturalists, some of them personally unknown to me. I cannot, however, let this opportunity pass without expressing my deep obligations to Dr. [Joseph Dalton] Hooker, who, for the last fifteen years, has aided me in every possible way by his large stores of knowledge and his excellent judgment.

In considering the Origin of Species, it is quite conceivable that a naturalist, reflecting on the mutual affinities of organic beings, on their embryological relations, their geographical distribution, geological succession, and other such facts, might come to the conclusion that species had not been independently created, but had descended, like varieties, from other species. Nevertheless, such a conclusion, even if well founded, would be unsatisfactory, until it could be shown how the innumerable species inhabiting this world have been modified, so as to acquire that perfection of structure and coadaptation which justly excites our admiration. Naturalists continually refer to external conditions, such as climate, food, &c., as the only possible cause of

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variation. In one limited sense, as we shall hereafter see, this may be true; but it is preposterous to attribute to mere external conditions, the structure, for instance, of the woodpecker, with its feet, tail, beak, and tongue, so admirably adapted to catch insects under the bark of trees. In the case of the mistletoe, which draws its nourishment from certain trees, which has seeds that must be transported by certain birds, and which has flowers with separate sexes absolutely requiring the agency of certain insects to bring pollen from one flower to the other, it is equally preposterous to account for the structure of this parasite, with its relations to several distinct organic beings, by the effects of external conditions, or of habit, or of the volition of the plant itself.

It is, therefore, of the highest importance to gain a clear insight into the means of modification and coadaptation. At the commencement of my observations it seemed to me probable that a careful study of domesticated animals and of cultivated plants would offer the best chance of making out this obscure problem. Nor have I been disappointed; in this and in all other perplexing cases I have invariably found that our knowledge, imperfect though it be, of variation under domestication, afforded the best and safest clue. I may venture to express my conviction of the high value of such studies, although they have been very commonly neglected by naturalists.

From these considerations, I shall devote the first chapter of this Abstract to Variation under Domestication. We shall thus see that a large amount of hereditary modification is at least possible; and, what is equally or more important, we shall see how great is the power of man in accumulating by his Selection successive slight variations. I will then pass on to the variability of species in a state of nature; but I shall, unfortunately, be compelled to treat this subject far too briefly, as it can be treated properly only by giving long catalogues of facts. We shall, however, be enabled to discuss what circumstances are most favourable to variation. In the next chapter the Struggle for Existence amongst all organic beings throughout the world, which inevitably follows from the high geometrical ratio of their increase, will be considered. This is the doctrine of [Thomas] Malthus, applied to the whole animal and vegetable kingdoms. As many more individuals of each species are born than can possibly survive; and as, consequently, there is a frequently recurring struggle for existence, it follows that any being, if it vary however slightly in any manner profitable to itself, under the complex and sometimes varying conditions of life, will have a better chance of surviving, and thus be naturally selected. From the strong principle of inheritance, any selected variety will tend to propagate its new and modified form.

This fundamental subject of Natural Selection will be treated at some length in the fourth chapter; and we shall then see how Natural Selection almost inevitably causes much Extinction of the less improved forms of life, and leads to what I have called Divergence of Character. In the next chapter I shall discuss the complex and little known laws of variation. In the five succeeding chapters, the most apparent and gravest difficulties in accepting the theory will be given: namely, first, the difficulties of transitions, or how a simple being or a simple organ can be changed and perfected into a highly developed being or into an elaborately constructed organ; secondly, the subject of Instinct, or the mental powers of animals; thirdly, Hybridism, or the infertility of species and the fertility of varieties when intercrossed; and fourthly, the imperfection of the Geological Record. In the next chapter I shall consider the geological succession of organic beings throughout time; in the twelfth and thirteenth, their geographical distribution throughout space; in the fourteenth, their classification or mutual affinities, both when mature and in an embryonic condition. In the last chapter I shall give a brief recapitulation of the whole work, and a few concluding remarks.

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> No one ought to feel surprise at much remaining as yet unexplained in regard to the origin of species and varieties, if he make due allowance for our profound ignorance in regard to the mutual relations of the many beings which live around us. Who can explain why one species ranges widely and is very numerous, and why another allied species has a narrow range and is rare? Yet these relations are of the highest importance, for they determine the present welfare and, as I believe, the future success and modification of every inhabitant of this world. Still less do we know of the mutual relations of the innumerable inhabitants of the world during the many past geological epochs in its history. Although much remains obscure, and will long remain obscure, I can entertain no doubt, after the most deliberate study and dispassionate judgment of which I am capable, that the view which most naturalists until recently entertained, and which I formerly entertained—namely, that each species has been independently created—is erroneous. I am fully convinced that species are not immutable; but that those belonging to what are called the same genera are lineal descendants of some other and generally extinct species, in the same manner as the acknowledged varieties of any one species are the descendants of that species. Furthermore, I am convinced that Natural Selection has been the most important, but not the exclusive, means of modification.
>
> —Charles Darwin

1. According to Darwin, what is the "mystery of mysteries"?

2. How did he establish his own reliability as the author of the essay and the book it introduces?

3. How would the first sentence of the fifth paragraph have affected many readers? Why?

4. What is the purpose of the references to woodpeckers and mistletoe?

5. What causes the struggle for existence?

6. What words would you use to describe Darwin's tone?

Lesson 21

Rudyard Kipling: Writing about the Empire

Objectives

- To explore the imperialism of Victorian England
- To appreciate Kipling as a forerunner of the many writers who have commented on colonialism

Notes to the Teacher

Rudyard Kipling (1865–1936) was a popular poet and fiction writer of his time. Qualities that made him popular then—namely, being humane and clever—also can be a source of enjoyment today. He was the first Englishman to receive the Nobel Prize in Literature (1907). His versatility makes it hard to place him in any one literary category. The scope of his rhymes and rhythms in poetry makes it clear that he had a thorough knowledge of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century poets, yet his fiction shows that he was a stylist in the use of words that can evoke moods and emotions.

The industrial age was also an age of empire building; this was interrupted by World War I (1914–1919). It is estimated that more than 25 percent of the world's population resided in the British Empire, which included Australia, Canada, Barbados, Hong Kong, India, Nigeria, South Africa, and many other countries. A famous adage claimed, "The sun never sets on the British Empire." The empire was a cause of national pride for the English, and it evoked curiosity and fascination about faraway, seemingly exotic places.

Kipling was born in Bombay; after being educated in England, he returned to India, where he worked as a journalist and also wrote stories and poems. Later he lived for a while in Vermont, and then he returned to England with his family. Two themes often found in his work are individual loneliness and performance of duty without thought of reward. His stories extol Victorian virtues of faithfulness to duty, fair play, loyalty, and discipline, and these mindsets align him with the sentiments of imperialism. The moral code of imperial Britain was fostered by the empire's need for resources. Kipling saw imperialism as a responsibility and a source of pride. Later writers would emphasize the injustices spawned by imperialism, and postcolonial viewpoints would supplant the pride the Victorians felt in their far-flung empire.

In this lesson students first learn about the extent of the empire England held during the nineteenth century. They consider the effects of imperialism, and they learn about Rudyard Kipling. Finally, they read and discuss "Gunga Din."

Procedure

1. Present students with the adage, "The sun never sets on the British Empire." Ask them what it meant to people in the nineteenth century.

   ***Answer**: Great Britain owned or occupied lands all over the world, so there was never a time when the entire empire was in darkness.*

2. Ask students what countries were or are part of the British Empire. If necessary, allow use of the Internet to explore the far-flung territories over which Queen Victoria reigned.

   ***Answer**: Victoria was Empress of India, and the English held Hong Kong; among holdings in Africa were Kenya, Nigeria, and South Africa; Australia belonged to England, and so did Canada, Barbados, the Bahamas, and many other countries and territories.*

3. Ask students how this reality of empire would have affected English people.

   ***Answer**: It was a source of pride and probably curiosity for those living on the home island; it also meant that people like civil servants, the military, and teachers were sent to foreign lands and English children could be born far from the home country.*

4. Explain that many works written since the age of imperialism focus on the destructive effects European domination had on indigenous cultures and on the political unrest that resulted and extends to the present day. During the Victorian period, however, empire was a source of pride. One person whose life was affected by it was Rudyard Kipling, who was born in Bombay, India, where his parents worked.

5. Read aloud the following quotation from chapter 1 of Rudyard Kipling's *A Book of Words*.

   > The magic of Literature lies in the words, and not in any man . . . a thousand excellent, strenuous words can leave us quite cold or put us to sleep, whereas a bare half-hundred words breathed upon by some man in agony, or in his exaltation, or in his idleness . . . can open to us the doors of the three worlds. . . .

6. Conduct an open discussion based on the following questions.

   - Can you give an example of a time when words put you to sleep?
   - What are some situations in which words can acquire great power?
   - What do you think Kipling meant by "the three worlds"?

     Possibilities include the worlds of the past, present, and future or the worlds of memory, reality, and imagination.

7. Ask students to write two paragraphs about an occasion during which words either put them to sleep or infused them with energy. The first paragraph should focus on the occasion, the second on the effect.

8. Explain that Kipling's work enjoyed a lot of popularity during his own time, and it sometimes reflected his experiences in India, where he was born and to which he returned to work as a journalist and creative writer as a young man.

9. Distribute **Handout 47,** and have students read the poem individually. Point out that some of the words seem unfamiliar, but it is usually easy to figure out meanings from context. For example, the Bhisti are an ethnic group in India. Conduct a discussion based on the questions.

Suggested Responses

1. The speaker is a member of the British armed forces who has been in battle and who served in India. He appears to be from the lower classes, and he has a Cockney accent, which Kipling communicates through the use of dialect.
2. The poem tells a story and has a lively, catchy rhythm; the repetition of lines addressed to Gunga Din (e.g., "You're a better man than I am, Gunga Din") is appealing.
3. Gunga Din saved the speaker's life and was a model of duty. The speaker seems to know that he would have been unable to do what Gunga Din did routinely.
4. The poem makes no attempt to hide the racism and assumption of English superiority that were at the basis of imperialism. Imperialism involved wars and wounds; it also took people who would probably have seldom have left their own neighborhood halfway around the world to places like India.

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Rudyard Kipling's "Gunga Din"

Directions: Read the poem, and answer the questions that follow.

Gunga Din

You may talk o' gin and beer
When you're quartered safe out 'ere,
An' you're sent to penny-fights an' Aldershot it;
But when it comes to slaughter
You will do your work on water,
An' you'll lick the bloomin' boots of 'im that's got it.
Now in Injia's sunny clime,
Where I used to spend my time
A-servin' of 'Er Majesty the Queen,
Of all them blackfaced crew
The finest man I knew
Was our regimental bhisti, Gunga Din.
He was "Din! Din! Din!
You limpin' lump o' brick-dust, Gunga Din!
Hi! slippery hitherao!
Water, get it! Panee lao!
You squidgy-nosed old idol, Gunga Din."

The uniform 'e wore
Was nothin' much before,
An' rather less than 'arf o' that be'ind,
For a piece o' twisty rag
An' a goatskin water-bag
Was all the field-equipment 'e could find.
When the sweatin' troop-train lay
In a sidin' through the day,
Where the 'eat would make your bloomin' eyebrows crawl,
We shouted "Harry By!"
Till our throats were bricky-dry,
Then we wopped 'im 'cause 'e couldn't serve us all.
It was "Din! Din! Din!
You 'eathen, where the mischief 'ave you been?
You put some juldee in it
Or I'll marrow you this minute
If you don't fill up my helmet, Gunga Din!"

'E would dot an' carry one
Till the longest day was done;
An' 'e didn't seem to know the use o' fear.
If we charged or broke or cut,
You could bet your bloomin' nut,
'E'd be waitin' fifty paces right flank rear.
With 'is mussick on 'is back,

'E would skip with our attack,
An' watch us till the bugles made "Retire."
An' for all 'is dirty 'ide
'E was white, clear white, inside
When 'e went to tend the wounded under fire!
It was "Din! Din! Din!"
With the bullets kickin' dust-spots on the green.
When the cartridges ran out,
You could hear the front-files shout,
"Hi! ammunition-mules an' Gunga Din!"

I shan't forgit the night
When I dropped be'ind the fight
With a bullet where my belt-plate should 'a' been.
I was chokin' mad with thirst,
An' the man that spied me first
Was our good old grinnin', gruntin' Gunga Din.
'E lifted up my 'ead,
An' he plugged me where I bled,
An' 'e guv me 'arf-a-pint o' water-green:
It was crawlin' and it stunk,
But of all the drinks I've drunk,
I'm gratefullest to one from Gunga Din.
It was "Din! Din! Din!
'Ere's a beggar with a bullet through 'is spleen;
'E's chawin' up the ground,
An' 'e's kickin' all around:
For Gawd's sake git the water, Gunga Din!"

'E carried me away
To where a dooli lay,
An' a bullet come an' drilled the beggar clean.
'E put me safe inside,
An' just before 'e died,
"I 'ope you liked your drink," sez Gunga Din.
So I'll meet 'im later on
At the place where 'e is gone—
Where it's always double drill and no canteen;
'E'll be squattin' on the coals
Givin' drink to poor damned souls,
An' I'll get a swig in hell from Gunga Din!
Yes, Din! Din! Din!
You Lazarushian-leather Gunga Din!
Though I've belted you and flayed you,
By the livin' Gawd that made you,
You're a better man than I am, Gunga Din!

—Rudyard Kipling

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1. Who seems to be the speaker in the poem? Why did Kipling employ dialect?

2. What factors account for the poem's popularity?

3. What is the reason for the speaker's conviction, "You're a better man than I am, Gunga Din"?

4. What does the poem reflect about the British Empire?

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