

English Literature Part 3

'Poetry and Prose of England' up to 1600

The Renaissance and the Elizabethan Age Part 1: 1500 - 1600

Week 1

Read pages 107-110 and St Thomas' More's work, Richard III'.

What is significant about More's historical writing? (see page 110)

Week 2

Read pages 113-117 on More's execution.

1. Who wrote this work and what was his relationship to Thomas More?
2. What is significant about this book for the history of English language and literature? (page 113)
3. What proof do we have that Saint Thomas practised extraordinary penances?
4. Why did Saint Thomas feel that July 6th was a fortuitous day to die? (see page 115, paragraph 1)
5. St Thomas was famous for his humour and it was said that his humour 'did not forsake him to the last'. What joke did he make when he saw the scaffold prepared for him? (p 116)

Week 3

Read about the Elizabethan age, pages 118-123

1. What was the most popular form of poetry in this age (see page 123 paragraph 3)
2. Name three great Elizabethan writers of drama (cf page 120 para 4)
3. What is Spencer's Faerie Queen a history of? (page 121, 122)

Week 4

Rewrite lines 12-18 of the Faerie Queen ("Whereas...appeared") using the modern English words given at the bottom of the page. If you like, try to draw an illustration of the character here described (who IS being described here? See line 47).

Week 5

Read Lyric Poetry page 127 onwards

1. What is the difference between narrative poetry and lyric poetry?
2. Read 'The Burning Babe'. Who wrote this poem, and where was he when he wrote it? (what does the SJ after his name mean?)
3. Explain in your own words stanzas (verses) 5 and 6 (ask if you don't understand anything!)

Week 6

Read 'The Sonnet', pages 135.

1. Explain Shakespeare's Sonnet XXIX in your own words (just a couple of sentences).

2. Explain the meaning of Sonnet CXV. What strikes you as the most effective part of this sonnet? (this might be an image, a particular combination of words, a metaphor...anything).

Week 7

Read Pages 143-146

1. It is often claimed that the Church condemned Wycliff and Tyndale's translation of scripture because She wanted to keep the common man from reading the bible. How might you defend the Church against this claim?

2. Where was the version of the bible which *we* generally use translated – and under whose supervision?

3. Read 'The Sacrifice of Isaac.' 146-8. What important spiritual lessons can be learned from this story?

Week 8

Read the introduction to the Book of Psalms p151-2. Who wrote many of the psalms?

1. Read Psalm 22. In modern English, describe three 'helps' mentioned here which God gives the man who loves Him.

2. How does this Psalm point to Christ?

3. Read Psalm 72. (i) Why is the writer at first envious of the ungodly?

(ii) What troubles him about his own godly life – what doubts does he have?

(iii) How does he find comfort? (l 17)

(iv) Why, by the end of the prayer, is he no longer envious? ll 18-28

Week 9

Read 'The Suffering Messiah'.

1. Find as many instances you can in our Lord's life which were foretold here by the prophet Isaiah (or as it used to be written 'Isaias' – just as we can write Messiah or 'Messias').

2. What is the main reason given for Our Lord's sufferings? (see esp. verse 11)

Week 10

Read the first two paragraphs on Elizabethan prose, p 160

1. Read Campion's Brag: (i) Why is it called Campion's Brag? Do you think this is a title he would have approved of (see section 6)

(ii) Summarise section 8 in modern English.

(iii) Campion was 'officially' hanged for treason, not for being a priest (though the latter was the real reason). What in his writing proves that there were no grounds for a charge of treason? (cf section 3 p 163)

(iv) If you were a Catholic in prison for your faith at that time, what impression might Campion's Brag have made on you – how might it have affected you?