Literary History Timeline

(adapted from *A Handbook to Literature*, 6th ed., C. Hugh Holman and William Harmon (NY: Macmillan, 1992), pp. 506-566)

\* Historical or non-English / American item

**? B.C. — A. D. 428: Celtic and Roman Britain**

**428 — 1100: Old English (Anglo-Saxon) Period**

c. 700 — *Beowulf* composed in present form

\*1066 — Battle of Hastings (Norman Conquest)

\*1215 — Signing of *Magna Carta*

\*c. 1307 — 1321 — Dante's *Divina Commedia*

**1350 — 1500: Middle English Period**

c. 1387 — Chaucer, "Prologue" to *Canterbury Tales*

\*1492 — Columbus lands in America

**1500 — 1660: The Renaissance (in England; 1607 - 1780 is considered the "Colonial" period in America)**

\*1517 —Martin Luther posts his theses in Wittenberg, leading to Protestant Reformation

\*1532 — Machiavelli, *The Prince*

1539 — English Bible (the "Great Bible") published

\*1558 — 1603 — Reign of Queen Elizabeth I

1564 — 1616 — Life of William Shakespeare

1601 — Shakespeare's *Hamlet*

\*1605 — Cervantes, *Don Quixote*, Part I

\*1607 — Settlement at Jamestown, Virginia

1611 — King James translation of the Bible

\*1620 — Pilgrims land at Plymouth

\*1640 — *Bay Psalm Book*: first book printed in America

\*1649 — Execution of Charles I

\*1649 — 1660 — Commonwealth Period–England ruled by Parliament

**1660 — 1798: Neoclassical Period (also known as "The Long 18th Century")**

\*1660 — Charles II restored to the throne ("The Restoration")

1667 — John Milton, *Paradise Lost*

\*1687 — Sir Isaac Newton, *Principia Mathematica*

\*1692 — Salem witchcraft executions

1719 — Daniel Defoe, *Robinson Crusoe*

1726 — Jonathan Swift, *Gulliver's Travels*

1740 — Samuel Richardson, *Pamela*

1740-5 — The Great Awakening (religious revival)

1749 — Henry Fielding, *Tom Jones*

\*1751 — Gray, "Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard"

1755 - Ben Johnson, *Dictionary*

1760-67 — Lawrence Stern, *Tristram Shandy*

1765-1830 — Revolutionary and Early National Period

\*1770 — Oliver Goldsmith, "The Deserted Village"

1771 — Ben Franklin, *Autobiography*

1775-1783 — Revolutionary War

1776 —Declaration of Independence

1783-85 — Noah Webster, Grammatical Institute of the English Language (speller, grammar, reader)

\*1789 — French Revolution begins

**1798-1832: Romantic Period**

1798 — William Wordsworth and Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *Lyrical Ballads*

1811 — Jane Austen, *Sense and Sensibility*

1817 — Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein*

1819 — Lord Byron, *Don Juan I and II*

\*1820 — The Missouri Compromise

1820 — Sir Walter Scott, *Ivanhoe*

1830 — Edgar Allan Poe, *Poems*

**1832-1870: Early Victorian Age (English Literature)**

1836 — Ralph Waldo Emerson, *Nature*

1836 — Charles Dickens, *Pickwick Papers*

1837 — Nathaniel Hawthorne, *Twice-Told Tales*

1842 — Robert Browning, *Dramatic Lyrics*; Lord Tennyson, *Poems*

1845 — Edgar Allan Poe, *The Raven*

1847 — Emily Bronte, *Wuthering Heights*; Charlotte Bronte, *Jane Eyre*

1847-8 — Thackeray, *Vanity Fair*

1849 — Charles Dickens, *David Copperfield*

1850 — Elizabeth Barrett Browning, *Sonnets from the Portuguese*

1850 — Nathaniel Hawthorne, *Scarlet Letter*

1851 — Herman Melville, *Moby Dick*

1852 — Harriet Beecher Stowe, *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*

1854 — Henry David Thoreau, *Walden*

1855 — Walt Whitman, *Leaves of Grass*

1859 — Charles Darwin, *Origin of the Species*

1860 — George Eliot, *Mill on the Floss*

\*1860-5 — American Civil War

**1865-1914: Realistic Period (American Literature)**

1867 — Karl Marx, *Das Kapital*

1868 — Louisa May Alcott, *Little Women*

1872 — George Eliot, *Middlemarch*

1874 — Thomas Hardy, *Far from the Madding Crowd*

1876 — Mark Twain, *Tom Sawyer*

1879 — Henry James, *Daisy Miller; \** Henrik Ibsen*, A Doll’s House*

1883 — Robert Louis Stevenson, *Treasure Island*

1884 — Mark Twain, *Huckleberry Finn*

1891 — Thomas Hardy, *Tess of the D’Urbervilles*

1893 — George Bernard Shaw, *Mrs. Warren’s Profession*

1895 — Oscar Wilde, *The Importance of Being Earnest*; Stephen Crane, *The Red Badge of Courage*

**1900-1930: Naturalistic and Symbolistic Period (American Only)**

1900 — Theodore Dreiser, *Sister Carrie*

**1901-1910: Edwardian Period**

1903 — Joseph Conrad, *Heart of Darkness*; Jack London, *The Call of the Wild*

1905 — Edith Wharton, *The House of Mirth*

1907 — John Millington Synge, *Playboy of the Western World*

1913 — D.H. Lawrence, *Sons and Lovers;* Willa Cather*, O Pioneers!*

**1914-1918: First World War**

1917 — T.S. Eliot, "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock"

1921- Aldous Huxley, *Chrome Yellow*

1922 - James Joyce, *Ulysses*; T. S. Eliot, *The Waste Land*

1924 - E.M. Forster, *A Passage to India*

1925 — Virginia Woolf, *Mrs. Dalloway*

1926 — T.E. Lawrence, *The Seven Pillars of Wisdom*; Earnest Hemingway, *The Sun Also Rises*

1929 — William Faulkner, *The Sound and the Fury*

1933 — W.B. Yeats, *Collected Poems*

1937 — John Steinbeck, *Of Mice and Men; The Red Pony*

**1939-1945: The Second World War**

1939 — James Joyce, *Finnegan’s Wake*

1940 — Richard Wright, *Native Son*

1946 — George Orwell, *Animal Farm*

1949 — Arthur Miller, *Death of a Salesman*

1951 — J.D. Salinger, *The Catcher in the Rye*

1952 — Samuel Beckett, *Waiting for Godot*

1955 — Vladmir Nabokov, *Lolita*

1957 — Jack Kerouac, *On the Road*

1958 — Chinua Achebe, *Things Fall Apart*

1961 — Iris Murdock, *A Severed Head*

1964 — Theodore Roethke, *The Far Field*

**1965 - ? Postmodernist Period**

1966 — Sylvia Plath, *Ariel*

1969 — Maya Angelou, *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*

1973 — Thomas Pynchon, *Gravity’s Rainbow*

1981 — Salman Rushdie, *Midnight’s Children*

1983 — Alice Walker, *The Color Purple*

1985 — Raymond Carver, *Cathedral*

1987 — Toni Morrison, *Beloved*

1988- Salman Rushdie, *The Satanic Verses*

1989 — Amy Tan, *The Joy Luck Club*; Thoman Pynchon, *Vineland*

<http://www.facstaff.bucknell.edu/rickard/timeline.html>