

# The Age of Words Worth – General Prose



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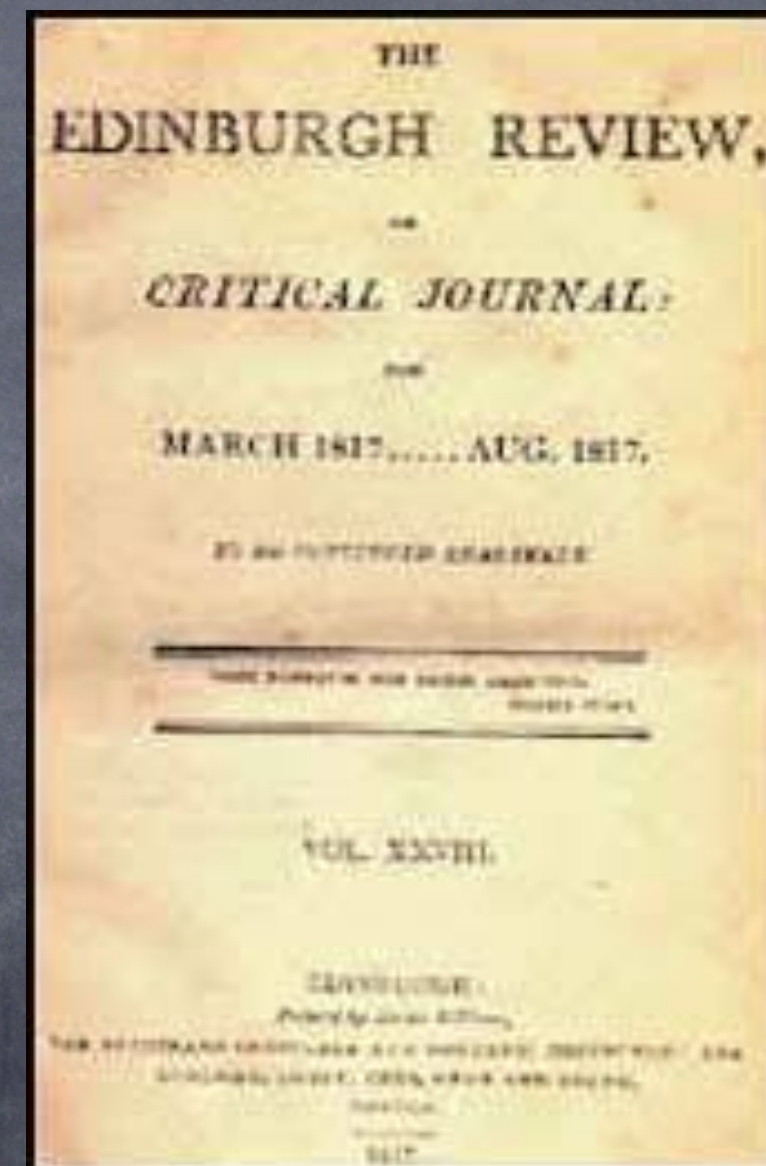


- General Characteristics
- An important feature... in the history of prose literature ....the rise of the modern review and magazine



- General Characteristics.
- First came the **Edinburgh Review** – in 1802
- by **Jeffrey, Brougham, Sidney Smith**, and other prominent men of letters of the **Whig party**.







- Seven years later,
- *The Quarterly* - started as a Tory counterblast.
- **William Gifford** was its first editor
- and on his retirement in 1824 he was succeeded by Scott's son-in-law, **Lockhart**.

- These were followed by two important magazines
- the range and interest - were broader and more varied



- Than the regular review **Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine**

- a **Tory monthly** launched in 1817 by Wilson, Lockhart, and Hogg ;



- and shortly afterwards, as its rival, *The London*

## *Magazine*

- early contributors Lamb, Hazlitt, De Quincey

(who was also a “Blackwood's man ”), Tom

Hood, Allan Cunningham, and Carlyle.



- Another well-known periodical
- of the same - **Eraser's** - founded in 1830.



- all the **men** who are to be mentioned were  
**regular periodical writers**, and **some of**  
**them gave the whole of their time and**  
**energies** to this practically new form of  
literature.



- It is well, therefore, to realise the influence which this form exerted upon prose literature in general.



- Two points may be emphasised.
- In the first place, it gave great encouragement to essay-writing
- Most of the prose writers of the time were **essayists** rather than makers of books.

- Secondly, it offered a fresh field for criticism, and especially for the criticism of contemporary literature.



- In this literature of criticism -
- Considerable space was naturally devoted to the discussion of the respective principles and merits of the old school and the new

- and thus the critics of the age divided –
- into two groups –
- the conservative or classical –
- and
- the radical or romantic.



- One thing should be noted here-
- fundamental changes now appear in the  
form and temper of prose
- and that these changes are parallel with  
those which had come over verse.

- Development of modern prose arose at the
- time of the Restoration -
- " The Restoration," says Matthew Arnold,
- " marks the real moment of birth of our modern English prose. ....



- ...It is by its organism an organism opposed to length and involvement, and enabling us to be clear, plain, and short that English prose after the Restoration breaks with the style of the times preceding it, finds the true law of prose, and becomes modern ; becomes, in spite of superficial differences, the style of our own day."

- the sentences were long
- parentheses were numerous
- the construction adopted
- was often that rather of Latin than of English syntax.



- In the new prose all this is changed
- The sentences are much shorter and simpler

- the parentheses and classical inversions are
  - cleared away.
- 
- Such changes made - **ease in writing and reading, and for directness and lucidity**



- It was employed in the eighteenth century by masters like
- **Addison and Goldsmith**

- Yet this prose was a characteristic product of its age in its **limitations as well as in its excellences**
  - it had lucidity, grace, and charm
  - but it was wanting in variety, warmth, and colour
- ;



- Limitation - sort of prose
- one could not express strong passion or deep feeling -

- the romantic movement brought -
- strong passion and deep feeling -
- and a love of variety, warmth, and colour.

- There is no surprise -

many of the prose writers of the **early nineteenth century discarded** entirely the eighteenth century tradition

- and sought richer harmonies and greater complexity of structure



- For Convenience -
- we may arrange the - writers - **in three groups**
- those who were chiefly **associated with the two great Edinburgh periodicals**

- secondly, the **London men**, who were largely, if not entirely, journalists and miscellanists
- lastly, such writers as do not naturally fall under one or other of these two heads.

- **The Edinburgh Men.**
- FRANCIS JEFFREY (1773- 1850)
- called by his admirers the “ Archcritic,” and by
- his victims “Judge Jeffrey”
- (in reference to the notorious “bloody judge”
- of the seventeenth century –
- conducted the trials of captured rebels.





- Contributed some 200 articles to the *Edinburgh*
- and may be regarded as the most influential though not the greatest critic of his time.

- On the whole, as our quotation in 86 -
- Lord Jeffrey wrote in an early number of the
- Edinburgh Review : “ Poetry has this much in common with religion, that its standards were fixed long ago by certain inspired writers, whose authority it is no longer lawful to call in question.”



- he represents the conservative side in criticism.
- 
- He was not indeed consistently opposed to
- the romantic movement,
- nor was he a blind supporter of the Augustan tradition ;
- but his general influence was on the side of authority and against innovation

- To-day his criticism seems in general unsatisfactory.
- He lacked breadth of sympathy and flexibility of judgment ;
- His object was not to interpret but to arraign (accuse) and, if possible, to condemn ; he was often brutal



- he cared little for subject-matter and fixed his attention on form and style
- and he had no feeling for the large human aspects of literature.



- His chief coadjutor, (one who aids another, associate) **SIDNEY SMITH** (1771-1845)
- an exceedingly clever clergyman, who is now better known for his witticisms than for his literature.

- He contributed some 65 articles to the *Edinburgh*,
- and produced a considerable body of other work-
- including a brilliant satire on the Irish question, *Peter Plymley's Letters* (1807).

- His writings labour under the disadvantage of having dealt for the most part with **dead abuses and forgotten controversies.**
- For this reason they are **now little read,**
- which is a pity, for they are full of good things

- Of the “ Blackwood's men ” the most famous in his own day –
- **JOHN WILSON** (1785-1854)
- better known under his pen-name of **Christopher North.**



- A man of powerful physique
- a wrestler and boxer
- and a devotee of the prize ring while he was Professor of Moral Philosophy in the University of Edinburgh
- he carried his high spirits and his boisterous energies into nearly everything he wrote.

- His output was enormous
- comprised stories, poems,
- and a vast number of magazine articles on all sorts of subjects.

- His best work is to be found in his
- *Noctes Ambrosianae*
- (or Nights at the Ambrose Tavern in Edinburgh)

which appeared in *Blackwood* at irregular intervals, and ran to 70 numbers in all.

- They are in the form of dialogues, and are full of conviviality (jovial, good humour), reckless humour, and dashing criticism of literature and politics.



- But their interest was largely local and temporary, - and their broad Scotch makes it additionally difficult for the southern reader to appreciate them.
- In regard to prose style, Wilson was entirely with the romantics.

- Though he wrote for the London Magazine as well as
- for Blackwood, we may here find place for a personal
- friend of Wilson, and a man of far greater importance  
in
- literature THOMAS DE QUINCEY (1785-1859).

- He, too,
- was essentially a magazinist, and the 17 volumes of his
- collected works consist mainly of essays on a large variety
- of subjects. His writing is often marred by glaring
- defects ; he had a habit of abusing his extraordinary
- learning and of sinking thereby into obscurity and
- pedantry ; in argument, while wonderfully subtle, he
- was frequently captious and trivial ; and he continually
- indulged in huge unwieldy digressions.

- His merits, however,
- are equally striking. His style, at its best, is
- marvellously rich and gorgeously rhetorical, and he
- remains one of our chief masters of romantic impassioned
- prose. He has great powers of narrative and description,
- as in his story of Joan of Arc, and the wonderful English
- Mail Coach and Dream Fugue.



- He achieved remarkable
- success in combining grim humour with the horrible in
- his Murder considered as one of the Fine Arts a piece of
- sustained irony which would have delighted Swift.  
The i

- But he
- will always be best remembered by his strangely fascinating
- autobiographical writings, especially the Confessions of an
- English Opium Eater, which may be classed among the
- finest things in our literature of personal experience. The i

- JOHN GIBSON LOCKHART (1794-1854) is, like De Quincey,
- a connecting link between Edinburgh and London, for he
- was long one of the mainstays of Blackwood, while from
- 1826 to within a few months of his death he was editor
- of the Quarterly.

- Though closely associated with Wilson,
- he was a man of very different temper and style of writing,
- for he was reserved, keen, incisive, and caustic. He
- produced much miscellaneous work, including four novels
- (one of which, Adam Blair, deserves mention as a powerful
- study of a good man's sin and remorse) ; a volume of
- spirited Spanish Ballads ; and an admirable Life of Burns.
- His principal title to fame, however, is his magnificent
- Life of Scott, whose daughter, Sophia, he married in 1820.
- His position as a critic is interesting.

- Like many other
- men in that period of transition in literary taste, he was
- partly of the old order and partly of the new. He was
- romantic with Scott, and sympathised with Wordsworth,
- but the work of the younger generation of Shelley, Keats,
- and Tennyson at the outset of his career aroused his
- hostility. The ascription to him of the authorship of The i



- the infamous Blackwood attack on Keats rests indeed
- on insufficient evidence ; but it is certain that he wrote
- the almost equally savage criticism in the Quarterly
- of Tennyson's 1833 volume. His nickname of the
- "
- Scorpion
- "
- points to his special gift of sarcasm, which
- he often used with deadly effect.

- The London Men. First among these in our
- affections is CHARLES LAMB (1775-1834), one of the best
- beloved of English authors, whose memory, as Southey
- said,
- "
- will retain its fragrance as long as the best spice
- expended on the Pharaohs."

- In nearly all his work,
- and pre-eminently in the most widely-known portion of
- it, the ever-delightful Essays of Elia, Lamb is as much
- an egotist as Montaigne, and the substance of what he
- writes is almost wholly drawn from himself, his experiences,
- reminiscences, likes, dislikes, whims, and prejudices.

- But we never complain of this, for in Canon
- Ainger's language, "it is the man Charles Lamb that
- constitutes the charm of his written words." He was a
- master of humour and pathos, both of which, and more
- particularly the peculiar way in which he combined them
- (blending the finest tenderness with the quaintest fancies)
- are so entirely personal to him, that we can compare
- them with nothing else in literature, and have even to
- coin the epithet
- "Lambish"
- in order to suggest their
- qualities. The i

- On the critical side, his influence was strong
- in the development of romanticism, and especially of
- that kind of romanticism which was retrospective in
- character and largely nourished itself on the literature
- of the pre-Augustan age. All his sympathies were with
- this early literature, and the bent of his mind and the
- direction of his taste are shown in his Elizabethan tragedy,
- John Woodvil, in his familiar Tales from Shakespeare (in
- collaboration with his sister Mary), and in his Specimens



- of English Dramatic Poets who wrote about the Time of
- Shakespeare a work which did much to spread the
- knowledge of our older English playwrights. His style,
- though like everything else about him, absolutely his
- own, is flavoured by constant contact with his favourite
- writers, Burton, Fuller, and Sir Thomas Browne. He
- even said, in his whimsical way, that he wrote neither
- for the present nor for the future, but for antiquity.

# • Other Prose Writers of the Period.

- Prominent among these
- yet standing entirely apart from every set
- and group - WILLIAM COBBETT (1762-1835)
- Political reformer
- Journalist
- Pamphleteer and maker of many books.
-

- A coarse (rough),
  - Vigorous
  - independent man
- 
- Cobbett was one of the **most striking personalities** and one of the **most widely influential writers** of his age
- 
- But only little of his voluminous work comes under the head of general literature.

- Perhaps his most characteristic book, and
  - the one which has the most permanent interest, is his
  - *Rural Rides*.
- 
- His *English Grammar* is probably unique
  - among grammars,
  - because it is thoroughly entertaining.

- As a prose writer he belonged to the race of Bunyan,
- Defoe, and Swift.
- Hazlitt regarded him as one of the best in the language
- He is vernacular, strong, simple, and clear.

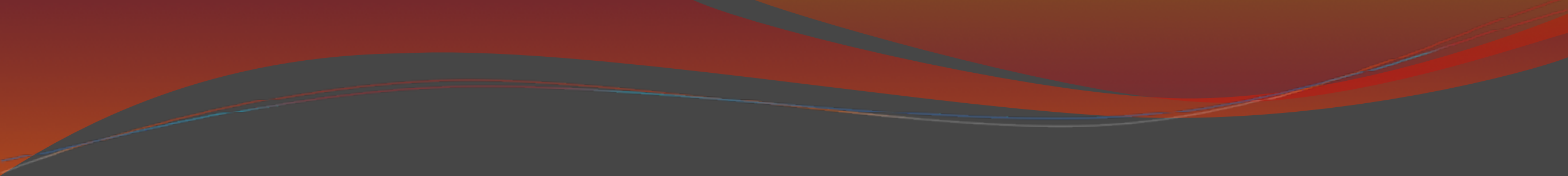
- He evidently put into practice his own principle
- a writer should always take the first word that comes to him, as this is sure to be the word which most fully conveys his meaning.
- This theory served him extremely well - but one would hesitate to apply it generally



- An antithesis to Cobbett in almost every conceivable
- particular is presented by LANDOR
- William Cobbett is one of our best vernacular and colloquial writers
- De Quincey is one of our chief masters of romantic prose
-

- Landor is unsurpassed (supreme) in the severe
- sententious, (full of meaning)
- sculpturesque style

- His principal prose work, the *Imaginary Conversations*,
- are dialogues between great characters of the past.
- Their composition extended over many years
- and there are some 150 characters

- 
- They cover a wide range of subjects in life and literature -
  - some are purely dramatic ; others are reflective and philosophical.

- he was not a great thinker, but a man of great thoughts.

- Besides his *Imaginary Conversations*, Landor also produced three other works : somewhat similar character
- *The Citation of William Shakespeare*
- *Pericles and Aspasia*, a tale of the golden age of Athens told in letters



- and the *Pentameron*, a series of dialogues between Petrarch and Boccaccio,
- especially noteworthy for their fine criticism of Dante.

- SOUTHEY was as industrious as a prose writer as he was as a poet
- as a whole his prose has worn better than his verse.
- His masterpiece is the admirable *Life of Nelson*.

- On the other hand, COLERIDGE'S prose is as fragmentary (incomplete) as his verse.
- His criticism - always suggestive
- and stimulating
- it exercised a profound influence in the establishment of the romantic principle in literature

- His *Biographia Literaria* is rambling (wordy)
- And unequal, and its style is in general poor

- it contains many pages of subtle analytical and interpretative power

- It gives him high standing among English writers on the theory of poetry.

- There are many others writers
- did excellent work in history and philosophy.
- But this is not the place to discuss the value of their contributions to the literature
- no useful purpose would be served by a mere catalogue of their names and writings.





## ● Other Novelists of the Time.

- Scott's principal contemporaries in prose fiction were three women who worked in a field entirely different from his that of the modern social and domestic novel. The first in order of time was MARIA EDGEWORTH (1767-1849),

- Whose influence on Scott's own production has already been noted. She was a fairly voluminous writer, but her
- best work is to be found in some of her short tales
- and in three Irish novels, *Castle Rackrent*, *The Absentee*, and *Ormond*.

- Her stories are over-didactic, but they
- have humour and pathos, and though very unequal,
- are brightly and simply written.
- SUSAN EDMONSTONE FERRIER (1782-1854),
- whose three novels, Marriage,
- Destiny, and The Inheritance, were also greatly admired
- by Scott,
- was a clever painter of Scottish, as Miss
- Edgeworth was of Irish characters and manners.

- Midway between these two in date of birth comes JANE AUSTEN (1775-1817) with her *Sense and Sensibility*, *Pride and Prejudice*, *Mansfield Park*, *Emma*, *Persuasion*, and *Northanger Abbey*.
- Miss Austen's range was narrow, and as she never ventured beyond her own experience and powers, she achieved, as no other English novelist ever has achieved, an even level of perfection.

- Her books are composed of the most commonplace materials, and are wholly lacking in all the elements of great passion and strong action.
- They are therefore slight in texture.
- But her touch was so sure, her humour so subtle, her characterisation so life-like, that all competent critics regard her as one of the finest artists that English fiction has ever produced.



- With men-writers, meanwhile, fiction exhibited greater
- variety of matter and method.
- CHARLES ROBERT MATURIN (1782-1824) carried on the wildest traditions of the romance of fantasy and horror in a number of tales of which *Melmoth the Wanderer* was the most
- successful,

- while THEODORE HOOK (1788-1841), one of
- the fun-makers of his generation, produced a string of
- loosely written novels which, though they seem very flat
- to-day, greatly amused the public of their own time.

- Far more important than the work of either of these
- men is that of JOHN GALT (1779-1839), whose *Ayrshire*
- *Legatees and Annals of the Parish* contain some  
admirable
- pictures of contemporary Scottish life.

- With THOMAS
- LOVE PEACOCK (1785-1866), a close friend of Shelley,
- fiction became the vehicle of witty satiric commentary
- upon the things and they were many in society and
- literature which the author disliked.

- He continued to write till almost the end of his long life, but we name him here because his really characteristic work Headlong Hall, Melincourt, Nightmare Abbey, and Crochet Castle was all done before 1832.

- As a matter of convenience, we may here also mention two followers of Scott in the historical romance  
GEORGE PAYNE RAINSFORD JAMES  
(1801-1860), and WILLIAM HARRISON AINSWORTH  
(1805-1882), whose best work appeared before the middle of the century.

- Neither has the slightest claim to literary
- distinction, but a few of the former's almost countless
- tales such as *Henry Masterton* and *Richelieu* are still
- readable ; while the latter's *Old Saint Paul's* gives a
- wonderfully vivid description of London in the days of
- the Plague and the Great Fire.



- Present Age









































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# Indo-European languages





# Pre-Historical/Pre-Roman





# The Celts/Pre-Roman

- The island we know as England was invaded by two groups of people: 1. Celts: known as Bythons (now spelled Britons) and 2. Gaels (who settled on the island now known as Ireland).
- The Celts were Pagans and their religion was known as "animism" a Latin word for "spirit."
- Druids were their priests and when clans had disputes, they intervened to settle them.



# Roman Occupation

Hadrian's Wall





# Important Events During Roman Occupation

- Julius Caesar begins invasion/occupation in 55 B.C.
- Occupation completed by Claudius in 1st Century A.D.
- Romans "leave" in 407 A.D. because Visigoths attack Rome (this leaves Britain defenseless)
- St. Augustine (the "other" St. Augustine) lands in Kent in 597 and converts King Aethelbert (King of Kent, the oldest Saxon settlement) to Christianity; becomes first Archbishop of Canterbury



# The Most Important Results of the Roman Occupation

- Established camps that eventually became towns.
- Maintained relative peace.
- Latin heavily influenced the English language.
- Christianity begins to replace Paganism, especially after St. Augustine converts King Aethelbert in 597.



# The Anglo-Saxon Period 410–787 A.D.





# Anglo-Saxons-Jutes





# Important Events in the (First) Anglo-Saxon Period

- ④ 410–450 Angles and Saxons invade from Baltic shores of Germany, and Jutes invade from Jutland peninsula in Denmark, thus driving out the Celts.
- ④ Nine Anglo-Saxon Kingdoms eventually become the Anglo-Saxon heptarchy (England not unified) or “Seven Sovereign Kingdoms”.
- ④ King Alfred “the Great” managed peace against the Danes for about a generation, until William of Normandy defeated them in 1066.



# Anglo-Saxon Literature

- Germanic ethos that celebrated the warrior and his exploits.
- Most storytelling was oral.
- Old English Poetry became distinctive...
  1. **Alliteration**- repetition of consonant sounds
  2. **Kenning**- a metaphor expressed as a compound noun - "whale-path" for the sea
  3. **Caesura**- a break or pause in poetry

RUNES: Anglo-Saxon alphabet/OLD ENGLISH. Runes were probably brought to Britain in the 5<sup>th</sup> century by the Angles, Saxons, Jutes and Frisians, and were used until about the 11<sup>th</sup> century. Runic inscription are mostly found on jewelry, weapons, stones and other objects. Very few examples of Runic writing on manuscripts have survived.



# Anglo-Saxon Poetry and Riddles

## *The Book of Exeter*

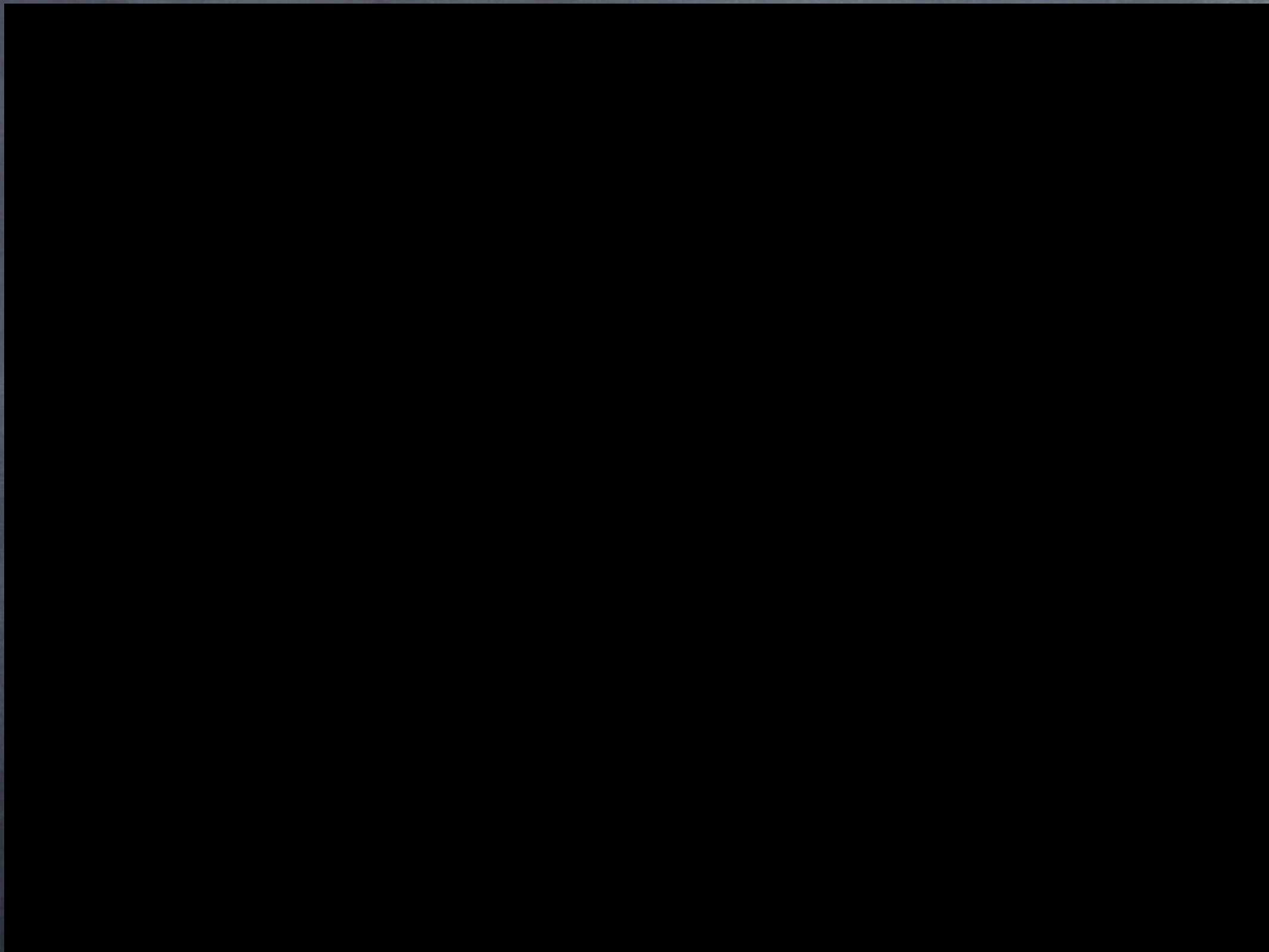
- Contains more than 30 poems and 90 riddles.
- Written down by monks in about 975, our primary source of Anglo-Saxon poetry
- Dominant mood in poetry is elegiac, or mournful
- Dominant tone of riddles is light and somewhat bawdy (for entertainment purposes—think SNL).



# *Beowulf...*

- 👁 The major text we will read from this period is the EPIC *Beowulf*. It is the story of a Scandinavian (GEAT) warrior or knight probably in the sixth century, who comes to help a neighboring tribe, the Danes, who are being attacked by a monster.
- 👁 We study English history to understand the CONTEXT of *Beowulf*, and we study *Beowulf* to understand the world which was OLD ENGLISH.
- 👁 Consider the fighting, hunting, farming and loving Anglo-Saxon heritage. The Non-Christians only hope was for fame and commemoration in poetry.
- 👁 *Beowulf* is considered the shining star of Old English literature.
- 👁 *The Book of Exeter* is the largest surviving collection of poetry.







# Viking Invasion

- The Vikings were sea-faring, explorers, traders and warriors, Scandinavians during the 8th–11th centuries.
- Expeditions that plundered and ended in conquest and settlements of Britain.
- King Alfred "the Great" in 871 was able to use the language to appeal the English and his efforts saved the language.



# Importance of the Viking Invasions

- Politically and Culturally- there was no central government or church\* BUT The Anglo-Saxon Code is evident in *Beowulf*.
- Linguistically
  - **Old English** is born- mainly Germanic (although even Germanic languages are derived from a theoretical Proto-Indo-European language, the grandparent of classical languages such as Greek, Sanskrit, Latin and German).
  - LOTS of dialects of Old English- because there are several separate Kingdoms, many founded by essentially five or six different cultures: Angles, Saxons, Frisians, Jutes, Danes and Swedes.
  - \*King Alfred "the Great" (ruled approx. 871-899 A.D.) was one of the first Anglo-Saxon kings to push Vikings back; in fact, he was one of the first kings consolidating power, unifying Anglo-Saxon kingdoms.




# Norman Invasion

- In 1066 at the Battle of Hastings, the Normans (powerful Northern Frenchmen) defeat the English and start a century-long conquest of England.
- **William (Duke of Normandy)** crowns himself the ruler of England (1066) and establishes a social system: **Feudalism**– a hierarchy of rulers under one lord; individuals gave military and other services to their overlords in return for protection and land.
- Cultural/Political/Literature Influence:
  - French becomes official language of politics and power and exerts enormous influence on Old English, which becomes obsolete.
  - William maintains efficient system of government of Anglo-Saxons, but replaces the English nobility with Normans, and creates a great class division that oppressed the Anglo-Saxons.



# A Brief Glimpse of the History of English from "Our Father"

OLD ENGLISH 	400– 1066	Beowulf	Fæder ure þu þe eart on heofonum si þin nama gehalgod tobecume þin rice gewurþe þin willa on eorðan swa swa on heofonum urne gedæghwamlican hlaf syle us to dæg and forgyf us ure gyltas swa swa we forgyfað urum gyltendum and ne gelæd þu us on costnunge ac alys us of yfele soþlice.
Middle English	1066– 1485	Chaucer	Oure fadir þat art in heuenes halwid be þi name; þi reume or kyngdom come to be. Be þi wille don in herþe as it is doun in heuene. yeue to us today oure eche dayes bred. And foryeue to us oure dettis þat is oure synnys as we foryeuen to oure dettouris þat is to men þat han synned in us. And lede us not into temptacion but delyuere us from euyl.
Early Modern English	1485– 1800	Shakes- peare	Our father which art in heauen, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth as it is in heauen. Giue us this day our daily bread. And forgiue us our debts as we forgiue our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliuer us from euill. Amen.
Modern English	1800– present	Austen	Extra Credit! Write "The Our Father" in Modern English.



So, what do I need to know about  
the History of the English Language?

🌀 Major dates

🌀 55 B.C.

🌀 43 A.D.

🌀 410 A.D.

🌀 597 A.D.

🌀 1066 A.D.



## Major people...

- 👁 Julius Caesar
- 👁 St. Augustine
- 👁 King Ethelbert of Kent
- 👁 King Alfred "the great"
- 👁 William the Conqueror
- 👁 William, Duke of Normandy



# What I really need to know about “the making of the English language”

## 👁 Major cultural/linguistic influences

- 👁 Celtic
- 👁 Roman
- 👁 Anglo-Saxon
- 👁 Viking
- 👁 Norman



# Stephen Colbert

## Satire and “The Word”

### English

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images/shows/colbert\\_report/  
video\\_archive/season\\_2/  
cr\\_02123\\_03\\_wrd\\_v6.jpg?width=80](http://colbertnation.mtvnimages.com/images/shows/colbert_report/video_archive/season_2/cr_02123_03_wrd_v6.jpg?width=80)



# Runic Writing...

- Write Your Name in Runes at Nova
- Runes were used by early Germanic tribes on documents in stone, wood and metal. They relied on these symbols not only for writing but also to tell fortunes, cast spells, and provide protection.
- The runic alphabet, or Futhark, gets its name from the first six sounds, much like our alphabet "A,B,C's".
- Can you write your name in Runes?
- Check out the Nova website: <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/vikings/runes.html>