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Language Arts

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# LANGUAGE ARTS 1209

## ROMANTIC AND VICTORIAN POETRY

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**Author:**

**Editor:**

**Illustrator:**

**Noreen J. Reed, M.A.**

**Bridget Humphrey, M.Ed.**

**Alan Christopherson, M.S.**

**Alpha Omega Graphics**



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# ROMANTIC AND VICTORIAN POETRY

This LIFEPAK® continues the chronological study of English literature begun and developed in Language Arts LIFEPAKs 1205 through 1207. You will first examine the historical background of the Romantic Age and the Victorian Age. The Romantic Age will be discussed in terms of the “romantic revolution,” a title that could appear ambiguous. The word *romantic* is used to describe a specific attitude or philosophy; *revolution* is used primarily to indicate the drastic changes related to that attitude. The Victorian Age will be discussed in terms of the variety and conflicts that characterize it.

The selected poems you will read are representative examples but by no means cover the broad spectrum of the poetry of both periods. You are encouraged to become familiar with both romantic and Victorian poets and poetry not discussed in this LIFEPAK.



Wordsworth



Queen Victoria



Tennyson

## OBJECTIVES

**Read these objectives.** The objectives tell you what you will be able to do when you have successfully completed this LIFEPAK.

When you have completed this LIFEPAK, you should be able to:

1. Explain the influence of the French Revolution, the American Revolution, and the Industrial Revolution on the development of English romanticism.
2. Identify dates of the events that played a significant role in causing or determining the characteristics of the romantic revolution in England.
3. Identify and explain the seven major areas of emphasis characteristic of romantic philosophy.
4. Define romanticism in relationship to neoclassicism.
5. Identify and explain the four major characteristics of the romantic theory of poetry.

6. Explain the significance of *Lyrical Ballads* and its Preface.
7. Identify the kinds of prosperity and poverty characteristic of Victorian England and explain their causes and effects.
8. List traits characteristic of Victorian ideals and behavior.
9. Identify the dates and major characteristics of Queen Victoria's life and reign and identify the dates of significant reforms that occurred during her reign.
10. List the characteristics and themes of Victorian literature in general and poetry in particular.
11. Name specific prose writers of the Victorian period.
12. Identify the major events and characteristics of the lives of each selected romantic and Victorian poet.
13. Discuss the characteristics of the style and attitude of each selected romantic and Victorian poet.
14. Explain the subject(s) and theme(s) of each selected romantic and Victorian poem.
15. Explain the development, form, and technique of each selected romantic and Victorian poem.
16. Name the titles of selected poems written by each selected romantic and Victorian poet.
17. Identify, by poem title and poet, representative quotations from the major works of each selected romantic and Victorian poet.

**Survey the LIFEPAAC.** Ask yourself some questions about this study. Write your questions here.

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## I. ROMANTIC REVOLUTION AND VICTORIAN VARIETY

Historically the romantic revolution in England occurred between 1798 and 1837. The term *romanticism*, however, refers to a comprehensive movement, or trend, in European thought and arts that began at the end of the eighteenth century. In essence, romanticism was a reaction—a revolution—against the eighteenth century's neoclassical emphasis (see Section I of Language Arts LIFEPAAC 1207) on reason, rules, and restraint. Like the philosophical movements of other historical periods, Romanticism is difficult, if not impossible, to define exactly. Specific characteristics, however, can be identified; among these characteristics are an emphasis on individualism, emotion, imagination, nature, simplicity, mystery, and melancholy.

The major causes of the romantic revolution are best realized by examining the political, social, and economical revolutions that either preceded or coincided with it. You will study these causes and their effects in this section.

The Victorian Age of England—named after the queen who ruled from 1837 to 1901—was a period of continuing change. Although generalizations about the variety of events and ideas that span two-thirds of a century are difficult to make precisely, one can note these specific characteristics: material progress; commercial prosperity; political, religious, and social reforms; scientific and mechanical developments; and conflicting views concerning scientific progress.

In this section you will examine these Victorian characteristics and their influence on the era's literature in general and poetry in particular.

## SECTION OBJECTIVES

**Review these objectives.** When you have completed this section, you should be able to:

1. Explain the influence of the French Revolution, the American Revolution, and the Industrial Revolution on the development of English romanticism.
2. Identify dates of the events that played a significant role in causing or determining the characteristics of the romantic revolution in England.
3. Identify and explain the seven major areas of emphasis characteristic of romantic philosophy.
4. Define romanticism in relationship to neoclassicism.
5. Identify and explain the four major characteristics of the romantic theory of poetry.
6. Explain the significance of *Lyrical Ballads* and its Preface.
7. Identify the kinds of prosperity and poverty of Victorian England and explain their causes and effects.
8. List traits characteristic of Victorian ideals and behavior.
9. Identify the dates and major characteristics of Queen Victoria's life and reign and identify the dates of significant reforms that occurred during her reign.
10. List the characteristics and themes of Victorian literature in general and poetry in particular.
11. Name specific prose writers of the Victorian period.

## VOCABULARY

**Study these words** to enhance your learning success in this section.

aridity	luxuriate	populace
deprivation	meager	preface
didactic	mesmerism	propriety
essence	myriad	radical
franchise	naiveté	symmetrical
imbue	noble savage	synthetic
impetus	perceptive	untainted
industrious	persona	urbane
inherent	phenomenon	wane
intuition	philosophy	



## POLITICAL REVOLUTION

One of the greatest political **impetuses** for the romantic revolution was the French Revolution that began in 1789 with the storming of the Bastille prison by mobs of French people—common people and peasants—who would no longer endure the economic and social hardships imposed on them by an aristocratic society.

By this time in history, England had already lost control of her American colonies. The results of the American Revolution had seemingly justified the colonies' rebellion for the cause of democracy: The independent nation formulated its new government on the principle that each individual has a right to participate in establishing the laws that govern him. Thus, in 1789 a significant number of **perceptive** Englishmen, including many of the romantic poets, enthusiastically supported the oppressed French who rebelled for the purposes of "Liberty, Equality, Fraternity." The English initially viewed the French Revolution as a cause for a new and better life for the common man. English enthusiasm **waned**, however, when the revolution became violent and chaotic. Disgusted by the revolution's immense bloodshed, England and other European countries declared war on France. This European alliance against France continued until Napoleon Bonaparte, who at the end of the revolution started his intended conquest of Europe, was defeated at Waterloo in 1815. Although disillusioned by the French Revolution, the English romantic poets still cherished its spirit—the desire for equality and a new beginning.



**Answer true or false.**

- 1.1 \_\_\_\_\_ The French Revolution occurred before the American Revolution.
- 1.2 \_\_\_\_\_ The French Revolution was basically a revolt of the oppressed common people and peasants against the ruling class of aristocrats.
- 1.3 \_\_\_\_\_ England continued its support of the French Revolution until its conclusion.
- 1.4 \_\_\_\_\_ Obviously all Englishmen regarded the American Revolution as a large mistake made by the American colonies.
- 1.5 \_\_\_\_\_ The idea and goal of equality for all was a contribution of the French Revolution to English thought.

## INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION

England itself at this time was undergoing **radical** changes, changes that could have led to as bloody a revolution as that of France. The Industrial Revolution, begun around 1750, was a major cause of the **myriad** changes.

**Advantages.** The most obvious change was England's transition from a rural, agricultural society to an urban, industrial society. Indeed, the Industrial Revolution changed the working habits and life styles of many people and offered them new opportunities. Because manpower was replaced by machine power, some people had more leisure time to pursue various activities. Consequently, the new middle class took advantage of the opportunity for education. The displaced rural poor found jobs in the cities' factories. Because material goods were machine-produced, they became more readily available to the **populace**. Common people now shared many of the opportunities previously enjoyed only by the aristocrats: leisure time, education, cultural pursuits, and material possessions.