

Elizabethan Age Writers and Their Works

In English Literature, Elizabethan Age has a special place and gets more attention than any other age simply due to the fact that Shakespeare wrote during this period. Thus, it makes Elizabethan Age highly important when it comes to UGC NET, as you can expect multiple questions just from this age. Though William Shakespeare is the highlight, he certainly wasn't alone. There were many writers active during this period, and some of them came before Shakespeare and inspired the great bard himself. Let's look at the Elizabethan Age's major writers and their works.

What is the Elizabethan Age?

The Elizabethan age in English Literature is referred to the period roughly from 1550 to 1630. It is named after Queen Elizabeth I, whose reign coincides with this period (1558-1603). Thus, all the body of works written during this period is considered Elizabethan work, and the writers are called Elizabethan writers. Some of the characteristic features or traits of the Elizabethan age include emulating the classics and their works, abundant output, and thriving literature due to a calm socio-political environment conducive to growth and stability.

Elizabethan Age writers and Their works

The Elizabethan Period holds special importance in the entire history of English literature for its superior production of dramatic output. It was in the true sense the first and greatest romantic epoch. Writers went back to the classics and freely took inspiration from the works of Virgil and other Roman and Greek writers. Even though the age is overshadowed by drama and dramatic like William Shakespeare, there was enough poetic vigor and quality produced of merit that demands attention. Poets such as Edmund Spenser was the most recognizable voice of this age. So, let's take a look at the Elizabethan Writers and their works.

The University Wits

Even before the great Bard, William Shakespeare, a few college-educated chiefly from Cambridge & Oxford, paved the way for him. They were collectively called University Wits. They did much to found the Elizabethan School of Drama. This group of writers was more or less familiar with themselves.

The University Wits & Their Works	
Author name	Their works
John Lyly	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Euphues: The Anatomy of Wit (1578) Euphues and His England (1580) Campaspe (1584) Endymion (1592) The Woman in the Moone (1595)
George Peele	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Araygnement of Paris (1584) The Famous Chronicle of King Edward the First (1593) The Old Wives' Tale (1591-1594) The Love of King David and Fair Bethsabe (1599)
Robert Greene	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Alphonsus, king of Aragon (1587) Frier Bacon and Frier Bongay (1589) The Scottish Historie of James the Fourth (1592)

Thomas Nash	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Summer's Last Will and Testament (1592) • The Unfortunate Traveller, or the Life of Jacke Wilton (1594)
Thomas Lodge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Woundes of civile War • Rosalynde: Euphues Golden Legacie (1590)
Thomas Kyd	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Spanish Tragedie (1585) • Cornelia (1593)
Christopher Marlowe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tamburlaine the Great (1587) • The Jew of Malta (1589) • Edward II (1591) • Doctor Faustus (1592)

William Shakespeare (1564-1616)

The single most popular writer of his time and since in English Literature. Shakespeare took drama to new heights, which was hardly touched by anyone ever since and certainly not in the dramatic output that he did. He wrote long narrative poems like Venus and Adonis (1593) and The Rape of Lucrece (1594). Though the concrete date of the works is not known, it is fairly an estimation.

William Shakespeare & His Works	
Published Year	Works
1591-1592	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 Henry VI • 2 Henry VI • 3 Henry VI
1593	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Richard III • The Comedy of Errors
1594	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Titus Andronicus • The Taming of the Shrew • Love's Labour's Lost • Romeo and Juliet
1595	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Midsummer Night's Dream • The Two Gentlemen of Verona • King John
1596	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Richard II • The Merchant of Venice
1597	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 Henry IV
1598	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 Henry IV • Much Ado About Nothing
1599	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Henry V • Julius Caesar
1600	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Merry Wives of Windsor • As You Like It
1601	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hamlet • Twelfth Night
1602	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Troilus and Cressida • All's Well That Ends Well
1604	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Measure of Measure • Othello

1605	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Macbeth • King Lear
1606	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Antony and Cleopatra • Coriolanus
1607	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Timon of Athens (unfinished)
1608	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pericles
1609	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cymbeline
1610	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Winter's Tale
1611	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Tempest
1613	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Henry VIII (in part)

Ben Jonson (1573-1637)

After Shakespeare, Jonson emerged as an identifiable figure in the drama. Though the quality of work can not be compared to Shakespeare, it is still of merit that requires an in-depth study. Like Donne, he revolted against the artistic principles of his contemporaries. He sought to classic to vent his uncontrolled and romantic exuberance of the ethos of his time period. For him, the chief function of literature was to instruct.

Ben Jonson & His Published Work	
Date of Publication	Work
1598	Every Man in His Humour
1599	Every Man out of His Humour
1600	Cynthia's Revels
1601	The Poetaster
1605	Volpone, or The Fox
1608	The Masque of Beauty
1609	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Masque of Queens • Epicoene, or the Silent Woman
1610	The Alchemist
1611	Oberon, the Fair Prince
1614	Bartholomew Fayre
1616	The Devil is an Ass

Francis Beaumont (1584-1616) and John Fletcher (1579-1625)

They mostly did the collaboration and produced comedies and tragedies of varying merit. They produced a lot of work. However, the authorship, how much joint work is to be assigned to whom is not accurately known.

List of Works by Francis Beaumont and John Fletcher	
Date of Publication	Work
1611	A King and No King
1607	The Knight of the Burning Pestle
1613	The Scornful Lady
1610	The Maid's Tragedy
1611	Philaster

Other Dramatists of the Elizabethan Age

Beyond the sole name of Ben Jonson in the post-Shakespearean Era of the Elizabethan Age, there were a number of dramatists writing on a range of topics. The quality of work is not great throughout their career and only a handful shine. Regardless of the number, there were a few dramatists you should take note of and their famous works.

Other Dramatists of the Elizabethan Age & Their Works	
Author name	Works
George Chapman (1559-1634)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Blind Beggar of Alexandria (1596)• Bussy d'Ambois (1604)• All Fools (1605)• Eastward Hoe! (1605)• Charles, Duke of Byron (1608)• The Tragedies of Chabot (1613)
John Marston (1575-1634)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Anotnio and Mellida (1599)• Antonio's Revenge (1602)
Thomas Dekker (1572-1632)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Old Fortunatus (1599)• The Shoemaker's Holiday (1599)• Satiromastix (1602)
Thomas Middleton (1570-1627)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Women Beware Women (1622)• The Witch• The Spanish Gipsy (1623)• The Changeling (1624)
Thomas Heywood (1575-1650)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A Woman Killed with Kindness (1603)• The English Traveller (1633)• The Royall King and the Loyall Subject (1602)• The Captives (1624)• King Edward the Fourth (1594-97)
John Webster (1578-1632)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The White Devil (1609-12)• The Duchess of Malfi (1613-14)• The Devil's Law case (1623)
Cyril Tourneur (1575-1626)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Revenger's Tragedy (1600)• The Atheist's Tragedy (1607-11)

Conclusion

The Elizabethan Age, also known as the Renaissance period in England, was a flourishing time for literature, marked by a host of brilliant writers and their remarkable works. William Shakespeare, the most celebrated playwright of the era, produced timeless masterpieces like "Romeo and Juliet," "Hamlet," and "Macbeth." Christopher Marlowe, a contemporary of Shakespeare, gained fame for plays such as "Doctor Faustus" and "Tamburlaine." John Lyly's witty comedies, including "Euphues: The Anatomy of Wit," further enriched the literary landscape of the Elizabethan Age. These writers and their works left an indelible mark on English literature, and their contributions continue to be cherished and studied to this day.