

Restoration period



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The restoration is an interesting time in history. People from all over the world, especially Europe, were moving to America. It was during this time that the colonies rebelled and we soon became our own nation. When the period started England had just ended a 20 year civil war. The plague had killed many and England was finally settling down. When the restoration was starting, most authors still modeled everything they did on the classics: Greek, Roman, etc. People were starting to gain an understanding of the world and be less superstitious. With all of the new reasons for things being given by science, religion had to change too. This was also when the smaller minorities of society became more ignored and repressed. But when the puritans fell out of power things started to happen. Theaters re-opened, satire appeared, and so did journalism. The Restoration period was marked by an advance in colonization and overseas trade, by the Dutch Wars, by the great plague (1665) and the great fire of London (1666), by the birth of the Whig and Tory parties, and by the Popish Plot and other manifestations of anti-Catholicism. In literature perhaps the most outstanding result of the Restoration was the reopening of the theaters, which had been closed since 1642, and a consequent great revival of the drama (see English literature). The drama of the period was marked by brilliance of wit and by licentiousness, which may have been a reflection of the freeness of court manners. The last and greatest works of John Milton fall within the period but are not typical of it; the same is true of John Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* (1678). The age is vividly brought to life in the diaries of Samuel Pepys and John Evelyn, and in poetry the Restoration is distinguished by the work of John Dryden and a number of other poets. Restoration literature, English literature written after the Restoration of the monarchy in 1660 following the

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period of the Commonwealth. Some literary historians speak of the period as bounded by the reign of Charles II (1660–85), while others prefer to include within its scope the writings produced during the reign of James II (1685–88), and even literature of the 1690s is often spoken of as “ Restoration. ” By that time, however, the reign of William III and Mary II (1689–1702) had begun, and the ethos of courtly and urban fashion was as a result sober, Protestant, and even pious, in contrast to the sexually and intellectually libertine spirit of court life under Charles II. Many typical literary forms of the modern world—including the novel, biography, history, travel writing, and journalism—gained confidence during the Restoration period, when new scientific discoveries and philosophical concepts as well as new social and economic conditions came into play. There was a great outpouring of pamphlet literature, too, much of it politico-religious, while John Bunyan’s great allegory, *Pilgrim’s Progress*, also belongs to this period. Much of the best poetry, notably that of John Dryden (the great literary figure of his time, in both poetry and prose), the earl of Rochester, Samuel Butler, and John Oldham, was satirical and led directly to the later achievements of Alexander Pope, Jonathan Swift, and John Gay in the Augustan Age. The Restoration period was, above all, a great age of drama. Heroic plays, influenced by principles of French Neoclassicism, enjoyed a vogue, but the age is chiefly remembered for its glittering, critical comedies of manners by such playwrights as George Etherege, William Wycherley, Sir John Vanbrugh, and William Congreve. (For further discussion of this period, see *English literature: The Restoration*.) King Charles I was executed in the January of 1649. He was the supreme King of Britain, with suzerainty over England, Scotland and Ireland. However, he earned a lot of disrespect from the

Parliament for his preposterous theory known as Divine Rights of Kings. The Parliament feared he was turning into an absolutist monarch and would eventually sideline the democracy that was so carefully established in Britain. In his final years, he was engaged in Civil Wars. The First English Civil War (1642) was against the Parliament and the Puritans of England. He was defeated in this War in 1645, but he continued his ideologies. In 1648, there was a Second Civil War, and he was defeated again in 1649. This time, he was captured, tried, convicted and finally executed for treason. The Parliament took over, formed a republic that came to be known as the Commonwealth of England. Monarchy, apparently, came to an end. Restoration of Monarchy by Charles II But, what seemed to be an end for monarchy actually turned out to be only a pause. 11 years later, in 1660, Charles I's son, Charles II assumed monarchy once again. The resurgence of monarchy was brought about by a series of historically significant incidents. One of the main leaders of the republican government formed after Charles I was Oliver Cromwell, who was by title the Lord Protector of England, Scotland and Ireland. He was also the commander of the armies that fought against Charles I in the English Civil Wars. Old Ironsides, as he was referred to, valiantly brought England, Scotland and Ireland under a unanimous republican rule after the execution of Charles I, and he was in fact one of the main persons responsible for his execution. Oliver Cromwell died in 1658 of a host of ailments. Historians attribute his death to malaria and urinary infections, but there could have been several other reasons. Cromwell was succeeded by his son Richard as the Lord Protectorate. However, Richard was not popular with the Army. The Army was prompt in removing him. Several other transfers of power later, Charles II issued what is known as the

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Declaration of Breda on April 4, 1660. This declaration was to lay down the fact that he was interested in accepting the Crown of England. Taking into consideration the various failed seizures of power in England, the Parliament accepted the terms. On 8 May, 1649, the Parliament accepted that Charles II had been the lawful monarch of England after the death of Charles I. Charles II returned from The Hague, where he was exiling, and assumed monarchy of England. This is what is known as the English Restoration.