

Minimal Canon *British Literature*

The Middle Ages

Geoffrey Chaucer, *The Canterbury Tales* (14th century)

Thomas Malory, *Le Morte D'Arthur* (15th century)

16th / 17th Century

Drama

William Shakespeare (1564-1616):

Tragedies: *Hamlet*, *Macbeth*, *King Lear*, *Othello*, *Julius Caesar*

Comedies: *Much Ado about Nothing*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Twelfth Night*, *The Tempest*

Histories: *Richard II*, *Richard III*, *1, 2 Henry IV*, *Henry V*

Christopher Marlowe, *Dr. Faustus* (1604)

Ben Jonson, *Volpone* (1606); *The Alchemist* (1610)

John Webster, *The White Devil* (1612); *The Duchess of Malfi* (1614)

Francis Beaumont, *The Knight of the Burning Pestle* (1613)

Thomas Middleton and William Rowley, *The Changeling* (1622)

John Ford, *'Tis Pity She's a Whore* (1633)

William Wycherley, *The Country Wife* (1675)

Poetry

Edmund Spenser, *The Faerie Queene* (1580-1596)

William Shakespeare, *Sonnets* (1609)

John Donne, *Songs and Sonnets* (1633)

John Milton, *Paradise Lost* (Books 1-5, 9, 12) (1667)

John Dryden, *MacFlecknoe* (1682)

Narrative

Thomas More, *Utopia* (1516)

Sir Philip Sidney, *The Defence of Poesy* (1595)

Walter Raleigh, *The History of the World* (1614)

Francis Bacon, *The New Atlantis* (1626)

Margaret Cavendish, *The Description of a New World, Called the Blazing World* (1666)

Aphra Behn, *Oroonoko* (1688)

18th Century

Narrative

Daniel Defoe, *Robinson Crusoe* (1719); *Moll Flanders* (1721)

Jonathan Swift, *Gulliver's Travels* (1726)

Samuel Richardson, *Pamela, or Virtue Rewarded* (1740)

Henry Fielding, *Joseph Andrews* (1742); *The History of Tom Jones* (1749)

Laurence Sterne, *Tristram Shandy* (1760)

Horace Walpole, *The Castle of Otranto* (1764)

Fanny Burney, *Evelina* (1778)

Anne Radcliffe, *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794)

Prose

John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (1689)

Alexander Pope, *An Essay on Criticism* (1711); *The Rape of the Lock* (1712); *An Essay on Man* (1733/34)

Mary Wollstonecraft, *A Vindication of the Rights of Women* (1792)

Drama

Joseph Addison, *Cato* (1713)

John Gay, *The Beggar's Opera* (1728)

Henry Fielding, *Tom Thumb, a Tragedy* (1730)

John Lillo, *The London Merchant* (1731)

Late 18th / 19th Century:

Poetry

William Blake, *Songs of Innocence* (1789); *Songs of Experience* (1794)

Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *Lyrical Ballads* (1798)

William Wordsworth, *Poems* (1807), esp. "Tintern Abbey", "I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud", "Upon Westminster Bridge"

Lord Byron, *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* (1812)

John Keats, *Poems* (1817), esp. "Ode on a Grecian Urn", "Ode to a Nightingale", "To Autumn"

Percy B. Shelley, *Prometheus Unbound. A Lyrical Drama* (1820); *Adonais* (1821)

Alfred Lord Tennyson, *Poems* (1842), esp. "The Lady of Shalott", "Ulysses".

Matthew Arnold, "Dover Beach" (1867)

Prose

William Wordsworth, *Preface to Lyrical Ballads* (1800/1802)

Percy Bysshe Shelley, *A Defense of Poetry* (1821)

Narrative

Matthew Gregory Lewis, *The Monk* (1796)

Jane Austen, *Pride and Prejudice* (1813); *Emma* (1816); *Northanger Abbey* (1818)

Walter Scott, *Waverley* (1814)

Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein* (1818)

Charles Robert Maturin, *Melmoth the Wanderer* (1820)

Charlotte Brontë, *Jane Eyre* (1847)

Emily Brontë, *Wuthering Heights* (1847)

William M. Thackeray, *Vanity Fair* (1847/48)

Charles Dickens, *David Copperfield* (1849/50). *Hard Times* (1854); *Great Expectations* (1860/61)

Elizabeth Gaskell, *North and South* (1854/55)

Wilkie Collins, *The Moonstone* (1868), *The Woman in White* (1859)

George Eliot, *The Mill on the Floss* (1860); *Middlemarch* (1871-72)

Robert Louis Stevenson, *Treasure Island* (1883); *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr Hyde* (1886)

Thomas Hardy, *The Return of the Native* (1887); *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* (1891)

Oscar Wilde, *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (1891)

H.G. Wells, *The Time Machine* (1895)

Drama

Oscar Wilde, *Lady Windermere's Fan* (1893); *The Importance of Being Earnest* (1899)

20th / 21st Century

Drama

George Bernard Shaw, *Major Barbara* (1905); *Pygmalion* (1912)
T.S. Eliot, *Murder in the Cathedral* (1935); *The Cocktail Party* (1950)
Samuel Beckett, *Waiting for Godot* (1952) *Endgame*; (1958), *Happy Days* (1961)
John Osborne, *Look Back in Anger* (1957)
Harold Pinter, *The Birthday Party* (1957); *The Caretaker* (1960)
Tom Stoppard, *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead* (1967); *Travesties* (1975)
Alan Ayckbourn, *The Norman Conquests* (1973); *House and Garden* (1999)
Caryl Churchill, *Top Girls* (1982)

Poetry

T.S. Eliot, "The Waste Land" (1922)
Ted Hughes, *Poems: The Hawk in the Rain* (1957)
Seamus Heaney, *100 Poems* (2018)

Narrative

Joseph Conrad, *Heart of Darkness* (1899); *Lord Jim* (1900)
James Joyce, *Dubliners* (1914); *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (1916); *Ulysses* (1922)
E. M. Forster, *Howard's End* (1910). *A Passage to India* (1924)
Virginia Woolf, *Mrs Dalloway* (1925); *To the Lighthouse* (1927); *Orlando* (1928)
D.H. Lawrence, *Lady Chatterley's Lover* (1928)
Aldous Huxley, *Brave New World* (1932)
Evelyn Waugh, *Brideshead Revisited* (1945)
George Orwell, *Animal Farm* (1945); *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1948);
J.R.R. Tolkien, *The Lord of the Rings* (1937-49)
William Golding, *Lord of the Flies* (1954)
Doris Lessing, *The Golden Notebook* (1962)
John Fowles, *The French Lieutenant's Woman* (1969)
Iris Murdoch, *The Black Prince* (1973)
David Lodge, *Changing Places* (1975)
Salman Rushdie, *Midnight's Children* (1981)
Antonia S. Byatt, *Possession* (1990)
Kazuo Ishiguro, *The Remains of the Day* (1998)
John M. Coetzee, *Disgrace* (1999)
Zadie Smith, *White Teeth* (2000)
Ian McEwan, *Atonement* (2001)
David Mitchell, *Cloud Atlas* (2004)
Hilary Mantel, *Wolf Hall* (2009)
Julian Barnes, *The Sense of an Ending* (2011)

Anthologies

The Oxford Anthology of English Literature, 2 vols. Gen. editors Frank Kermode and John Hollander (Oxford: OUP, 1973).
The Norton Anthology of English Literature, 2 vols. Gen. editor M.H. Abrams (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1986).
Macmillan Anthologies of English Literature, 5 vols. Gen. editors A. Norman Jeffares and Michael Alexander (London: Macmillan, 1989).

Theory

Barry, Peter, *Beginning Theory. An Introduction to Literary and Cultural Theory* (Manchester: MUP, 2002).

Lodge, David (ed.), *After Bakhtin. Essays on Fiction and Criticism* (London: Routledge, 1990).

Klages, Mary / Frank Reynoso / Bill Brown (eds.) *Literary Theory for Beginners* (Hanover, 2017).

Rivkin, Julie / Michael Ryan (eds.), *Literary Theory. An Anthology* (Chichester: Wiley / Blackwell, 2017).

See also: Minimal Canon American Literature.