



LANGUAGE ARTS

STUDENT BOOK

▶ **12th Grade | Unit 7**

LANGUAGE ARTS 1207

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Author:

Mary Robbins M.A.

Editor:

Alan Christopherson, M.S.

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Rock Rapids, IA 51246-1759**

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SEVENTEENTH- AND EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY ENGLISH LITERATURE

Introduction

The seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in England may seem far removed from today, but the study of history and literature in this LIFEPAK® should illustrate some significant similarities. Many problems that trouble people today existed then. Political corruption and struggles for power were even more common. Wars were being waged often for economic purposes. Cities were becoming industrialized, and the displaced poor were flocking to those cities to find work—and to live in slums. Trade was flourishing, but so were the corrupting attitudes that often accompany wealth. Money was becoming more and more powerful while good works and good families counted less. Much of the newly educated reading public lacked a knowledge and appreciation of Greek and Roman literature and encouraged the publication of rapidly written periodicals. Newly built smoke stacks of industry were beginning to produce black clouds of pollution. Changes were happening so rapidly that many people felt the same fear of the future that many people feel today. In short, more people were gaining more power and often were not certain what to do with that newly acquired political and economic strength.

The writers of the best literature of those two centuries were involved in their times. They did not withdraw from their responsibilities. They wrote poetry, essays, and longer works specifically to inform the public of the changes taking place and to persuade it to do something about those changes. John Milton wrote essays to support the actions of the Puritan government. He wrote fewer political works after the king's restoration. Yet his concerns were still for other people; his themes in *Paradise Lost* are centered around God's will and man's free will during unsettled times. Similarly, the Puritan John Bunyan wrote about the salvation of a character named Christian so that Christian could serve as an example for readers needing such spiritual support. Writing somewhat later, Jonathan Swift chose satire to belittle individuals and practices that represented to him political, moral, and cultural decay. He had been actively involved in his political party's government but was removed from that position by the opposition. Finally, Oliver Goldsmith satirized the greed and foolish political and personal practices of his day, but he also described sympathetically the unfortunate results of the agricultural and industrial revolutions taking place. Since these writers had studied classical literature and all had admired its organization and clarity, they desired to write literature logically organized and convincingly presented with carefully chosen words. They desired to create beautiful works of art—to please as well as to inform.

Because many subjects you will find here are still important issues and because the literature is enjoyable to read, you should benefit both intellectually and spiritually from this study.

Objectives

Read these objectives. The objectives tell you what you will be able to do when you have successfully completed this LIFEPAAC. When you have finished this LIFEPAAC, you will be able to:

1. Describe the political, economic, and cultural background of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.
2. Explain the resulting social unrest caused by the rapid political, economic, and cultural changes.
3. Outline John Milton's personal crises and their effect on the themes of his work.
4. Explain Milton's early interest in Christ's role in saving mankind in the poem "On the Morning of Christ's Nativity."
5. Define Milton's own attitude toward his poetic gift and his blindness in his sonnet "On His Blindness."
6. Identify Milton's purpose and his use of epic structure, recurring Biblical types, and imagery in Books I, VIII, and XII of *Paradise Lost*.
7. Outline John Bunyan's biography and emphasize those events that shaped his great work, *Pilgrim's Progress*.
8. Identify Bunyan's use of allegory, realistic human traits, and symbols in selections from *Pilgrim's Progress*.
9. Outline the major events in the life of Alexander Pope.
10. Define the methods and forms Pope used in his satire.
11. Outline Jonathan Swift's biography, with emphasis on the political and religious activities that most influenced his satire.
12. Explain Swift's satiric purpose in short passages from *Gulliver's Travels*.
13. Outline the major events in the life and career of Samuel Johnson.
14. Define the literary, moral, and political attitudes of Samuel Johnson.
15. Outline Oliver Goldsmith's writing career and explain some of the aspects of his style.
16. Identify and explain the historical background and sentimentality of Goldsmith's poem *The Deserted Village*.

Survey the LIFEPAAC. Ask yourself some questions about this study and write your questions here.

1. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

History and literature were closely related during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. You should not attempt to study the literature written at that time without having a solid understanding of major political, economic, and cultural developments and their effects. This section explains background events. The charts that are included should help you keep these events in historical perspective.

Section Objectives

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

1. Describe the political, economic, and cultural background of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.
2. Explain the resulting social unrest caused by the rapid political, economic, and cultural changes.

Vocabulary

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

displaced

dissenter

effeminate

emigrate

lyrical

maneuver

nonconformist

parish

periodical

propagandist

sensibility

sentimental

suppressive

theme

Note: All vocabulary words in this LIFEPAAC appear in **boldface** print the first time they are used. If you are not sure of the meaning when you are reading, study the definitions given.



| John Bunyan



| Oliver Goldsmith



| Samuel Johnson



| John Milton



| Alexander Pope



| Jonathan Swift

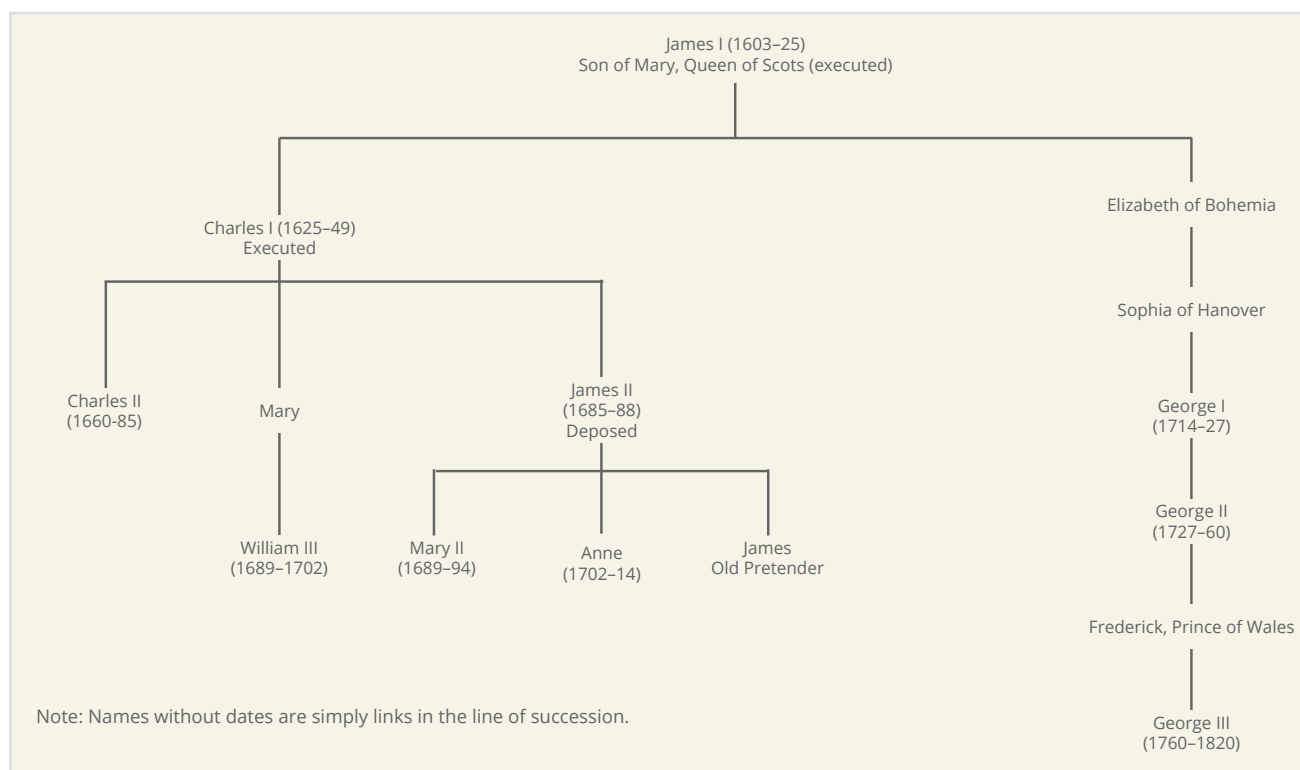
Events 1600–1800

1603–25	1625–49	1649–60	1660–85	1685–88	1689–1702	1702–14	1714–27	1727–60	1760–1820
James I. King	Charles I. King	Commonwealth	Charles II. King	James II. King	William III. and Mary II.	Anne. Queen	George I. King	George II. King	George III. King
	1629–40 No parliament convened. 20,000 Puritans emigrated to New England	1653 Cromwell made lord protector	1678 The “popish plot.” fear of Catholics			1702 William III. dies from fall		1739 War declared with Spain	1776 American Declaration of Independence
	1642 Cavaliers and Puritans have begun armed conflict	1658 Cromwell’s death, son Richard takes over		1688 James II. flees England		1714 Anne dies, George I. becomes king, all Tories are dismissed		1748 Shaky peace with France	1780 London mobs riot over extension of Roman Catholic civil rights
	1645 War ended	1660 Charles II. invited to become king, laws against Puritans			1689 Act of Toleration freedom of worship to Protestants outside the Church of England			1750s & 1760s Beginning of the industrial Revolution, steam, spinning, and weaving machinery invented	1789 Beginning of the French Revolution
	1649 Charles I. executed	1665 Bubonic plague			1701 War with France			1751–56 Clashes with France in North America, India	
		1666 Great fire of London destroys heart of city						1756–63 Seven Years’ War with France and Prussia, Canada and India gained at conclusion	
		1667 English seacoast ransacked by Dutch navy during war with Holland							

| Chart 1

Kings and Queens of England in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries

Years of Reigns Follow Names



| Chart 2

THE COMMONWEALTH AND EARLIER

Commonwealth is the term used to describe the Puritans' control of English government from 1649 until 1660. To understand how the Puritans became powerful enough to gain control of England, you must first understand who the Puritans were. The term *Puritan* was probably first applied during Elizabethan times to those men, mostly craftsmen and citizens of the flourishing bourgeois group, who believed that the Church of England should be "purified" of unnecessary ritual that was no longer meaningful and of organization that was no longer able to reach individual members. These **dissenters** resented their government's imposing on them what they considered to be a corrupt faith. **Parish** priests of the Church of England were awarded their positions by the owner of the most land in the area. The clergyman's payment came out of parish tax funds

and, once established, was automatic. Once a vicar was given a parish, he almost always kept that parish. The overseeing bishops were appointed by the monarch. Thus, by the time of Elizabeth's successor, James I (see Chart 2), seemingly no division existed between church and state. Tax money supported the church, and the king governed it.

Anglicans, members of the Church of England, feared these Puritans and other dissenters, or **non-conformists**, because they rebelled not only against the church but also against the state, since church and state were so closely related. Fearful Anglicans made laws to enforce conformity to the Church of England. One such law was responsible for John Bunyan's stay in Bedford jail. These laws forced Puritans further away from the party of the king.

James I himself widened that division by insisting on his absolute power as king over the powers of Parliament, which contained several Puritan members. James wished to ally England with Catholic Spain, a wish that further angered the Puritans. His son, Charles I, was so eager to control England without Parliament that no Parliament was convened from 1629 to 1640 (see Chart 1). Moreover, Charles clearly preferred Catholic ritual and began to restore it to the English Church. This period of time was so difficult for the Puritans that nearly twenty thousand **emigrated** to America. In 1640 when the newly convened Parliament refused to give Charles money to quiet unrest in Scotland, the stage was set for the civil war, which began in 1642, between the king's forces (sometimes called Cavaliers or Royalists) and the Puritans (also called Roundheads).

Puritans felt justified in defying the king because they disapproved of the moral degeneration that seemed to originate from the king and his Cavaliers and because they believed in religious and, thus, political democracy. Just as each Puritan felt able

to examine his own conscience and to study and interpret the Bible without the aid of clergymen, he also felt the responsibility and competence to play an active part in his government.

In 1645 the Puritans won the civil war. In 1649, after some Puritan **maneuvering** in Parliament, Charles I was executed. Thus, in 1649 the Commonwealth began its eleven year existence. During this period Parliament was the ruling body until 1653 when the Puritan leader of the Parliamentary forces, Oliver Cromwell, was declared Lord Protector. Oliver Cromwell died in 1658. His son could not prevent an invitation to Charles II to return to England as king. By this time most English citizens had become tired of the Puritan government's **suppressive** actions, which included closing theaters by Parliamentary act from 1642 to 1660, beheading the Archbishop of Canterbury, and evicting Anglican clergymen from their parishes. The English were eager to celebrate Charles II's return. Thus in 1660, Charles II was made king and the English monarchy was restored.

Answer these questions.

- 1.1 What was the Commonwealth? _____

- 1.2 Who fought the civil war taking place in 1642 to 1645? _____

- 1.3 Did the Puritans approve of the close ties between the Church of England and the English government? Why or why not? _____

- 1.4 What are some reasons why Puritans emigrated to New England? _____

- 1.5 Why did the Commonwealth come to an end in 1660? _____

THE RESTORATION OF CHARLES II

The Restoration did not altogether quiet the discontent that had led to civil war. Anglicans still feared Puritan influence, and Puritans as well as many Anglicans feared renewed Catholic pressure from the monarchy. Less important uprisings occurred in 1678, 1685, and finally, in 1688. Even though Charles II had, by his Act of Grace, pardoned those Puritans not directly responsible for Charles I's death, the Cavalier Parliament caused nearly two thousand clergy with Puritan leanings to leave the Church of England in 1661. By 1672 the Test Act forced all officers of the state, civil and military, to prove their sympathies by taking communion according to the form of the Church of England.

Charles I's Catholic preferences had so frightened the English that they readily believed Titus Oates (1649-1705) who invented a "Popish Plot" in which Catholics were supposed to have planned to assassinate Charles II and other political leaders so that they could place his brother James II (a strong Roman Catholic) on the throne. Memories and resentments of previous Catholic injustices were still fresh: Queen "Bloody" Mary I, daughter of Henry VIII, had burned Protestants at the stake only a century earlier; and the Catholic-inspired Gunpowder Plot (when Guy Fawkes was prepared to blow up the

king and Parliament) had happened in 1605. Once again this fear, based on the imaginary "Popish Plot," renewed violence; some thirty-five people were executed for supposed treason.

When James II took the throne in 1685 at his brother's death, he confirmed some of those fears. In 1688 he imprisoned seven bishops of the Church of England in the London Tower. When his second wife bore a son, many feared the obvious Catholic heir to the throne.

Fortunately, English Protestants found a solution without the execution of another king. Charles II's elder niece Mary, heiress to the throne, had been contracted to marry William of Orange, of Protestant Holland. William was quickly invited to England to insure Protestantism in 1688. This turn of events caused James and many of his followers, known as Jacobites, to flee to France. William and Mary's acceptance of the throne was known as "The Glorious Revolution." At that time, Parliament was given the power to determine the succession to the throne. That "revolution" provided for political and religious toleration and thus brought government reform agreeable to the English majority.

Write the letter of the correct answer on the line.

- 1.6** What was the Restoration? _____
- Oliver Cromwell was restored to the throne.
 - Charles II was invited back to England to be king.
 - Charles I was invited back to England to be king.
 - Order was restored to England in 1688.
- 1.7** What form of discrimination was not used against the Puritans immediately after the Restoration?

- Clergymen with Puritan sympathies lost their positions.
 - All officers of the state were forced by the Test Act to take communion according to the Church of England.
 - Some Puritans were imprisoned.
 - Some Puritans were shipped to Africa.



804 N. 2nd Ave. E.
Rock Rapids, IA 51246-1759

800-622-3070
www.aop.com

LAN1207 – Aug '17 Printing

ISBN 978-1-58095-357-3

