

# The Modern World: 1900 to the Present

## Introduction to the Literary Period

### Feature Menu



Interactive Time Line

Milestone: New Ideas, Art, and  
Literature

Milestone: The Great War

Milestone: World War II

Milestone: The End of the Empire

Milestone: British Writing After World  
War II

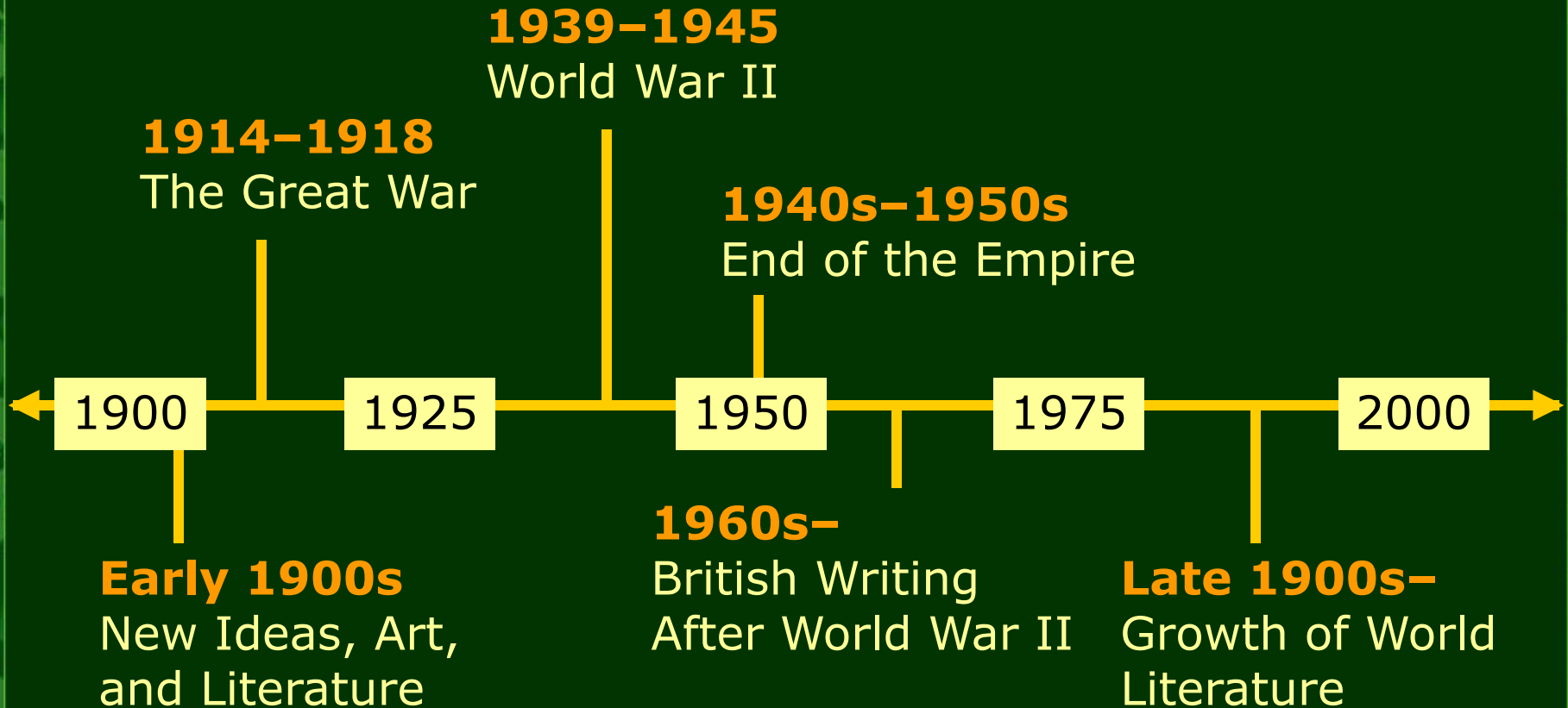
Milestone: Growth of World Literature

What Have You Learned?



# The Modern World: 1900 to the Present

Choose a link on the time line to go to a milestone.



Previous

Next

Feature  
Menu

Exit

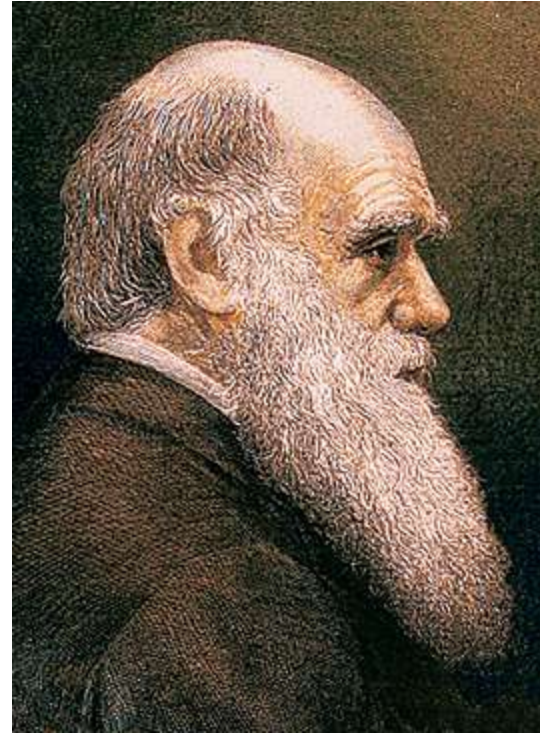
# New Ideas, Art, and Literature

## New Ideas in Science—Charles Darwin

*Origin of Species* (1859)

- theory of evolution based on natural selection ▼
- sparked debate over evolution versus creationism ▼

Social Darwinism



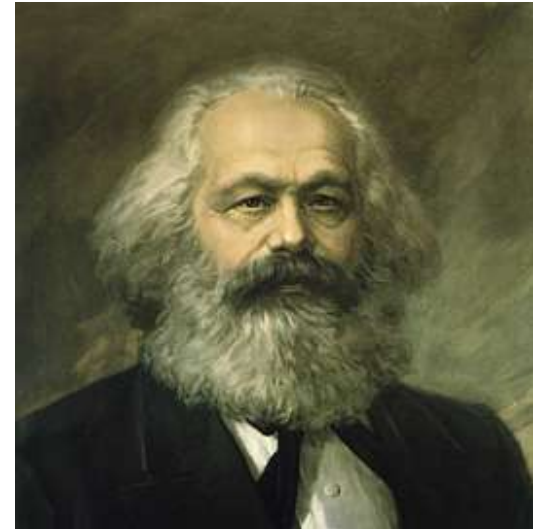
# New Ideas, Art, and Literature

## New Ideas in Politics—Karl Marx

German philosopher and economist; lived in London ▼

### *Das Kapital* (1867)

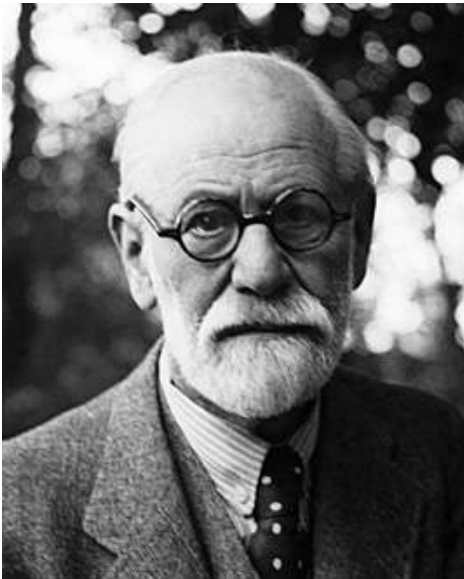
- traced economic injustices to capitalism ▼
- said workers should own means of production ▼
- advocated doing away with private property



# New Ideas, Art, and Literature

## New Ideas in Psychology—Sigmund Freud

Freud found motives for human behavior in the unconscious—an irrational and sexually driven realm ▼



- Conservative Victorians outraged by Freud's claims ▼
- Many writers and artists intrigued by notion of unconscious

# New Ideas, Art, and Literature

## Experimentation in the Arts

Henri Matisse and other French painters

- Bold new use of lines and colors
- Called *les fauves* (the wild beasts) ▼



Igor Stravinsky

- Ballet *The Rite of Spring*—primitive rhythms and dissonant harmonies; riot at première



# New Ideas, Art, and Literature

## A Revolution in Literature

### James Joyce

- New ways of exploring myth and symbol, sexuality, time, human consciousness
- *Ulysses*—very controversial in 1922 ▼

### Virginia Woolf

- rejected traditional chronological order
- experimented with novelistic structure, point of view, stream of consciousness

# The Great War

## World War I (1914–1918)

Allied Forces—Great Britain, France, Russia  
Central Powers—Germany, Austria-Hungary ▼



### Costs to Great Britain:

- Tremendous loss of life
- Weakened economy
- Tottering colonial empire
- Disillusionment, cynicism

[Return to Time Line](#)



# World War II

## Causes of World War II

- Failure of the League of Nations ▼
- Worldwide economic depression ▼
- Rise of totalitarianism leading to development of fascism



# World War II

## Fascism

Fascism is a government that is rigidly nationalistic, ruled by a dictator who wields absolute power backed by force. ▼

Germany: Adolf Hitler

Italy: Benito Mussolini

Russia: Joseph Stalin



# World War II

## Japan

- Ally of Germany and Italy ▼
- Entire city of Hiroshima wiped out by a single atomic bomb dropped from an American plane on August 6, 1945 ▼
- End of war with Japan



# World War II



**1941:** Germany defeats France

**1945:** Allies defeat Germany and Japan



Click to hear words of Prime Minister Winston Churchill (June 1940).

# Responses to War and Oppression

## Primo Levi

- Italian
- was interned at Auschwitz
- depicted personal trauma of the Holocaust

## Yasunari Kawabata

- Japanese
- evokes loss and pain of civilians during WW II in "The Silver Fifty-Sen Pieces"

## Ha Jin

- Chinese
- explores unequal relationships between the state and the individual

[Return to Time Line](#)

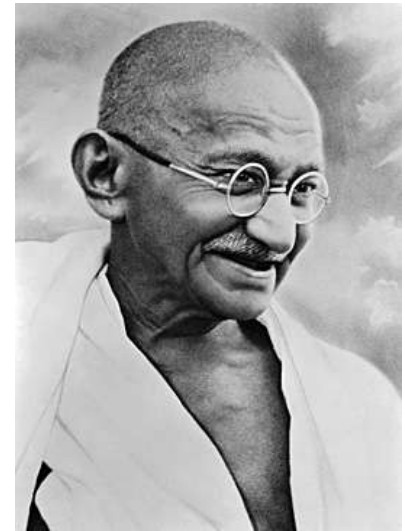
# The End of the Empire

## Before World War II . . .

Australia, Canada, and South Africa separate from British Empire. ▼

## Late 1940s through 1960s . . .

- Most remaining colonies, including India, gain independence.
- Newly independent nations begin to assert their own identities.



Mohandas  
K. Gandhi



## British Writing After World War II

**Angry Young Men**—criticized pretensions of intellectuals, bland lives of middle class

→ Kingsley Amis—*Lucky Jim* (1953), satirical novel about university life ▼

**Postmodernism**—term applied to many works written since World War II

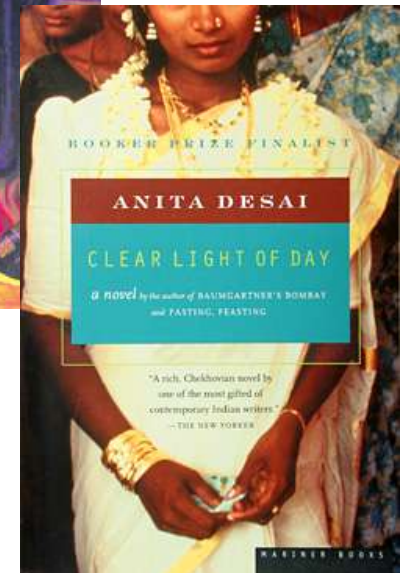
→ Deals with women's rights, multiculturalism, environment, nuclear destruction

# The Growth of World Literature

## Postcolonial Literature

Writers from former British colonies

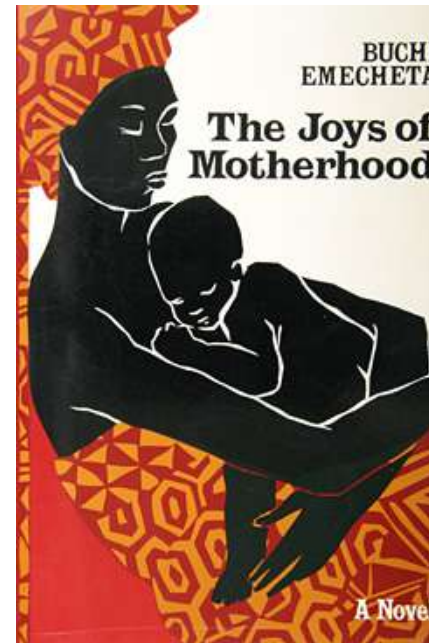
- explore issues of personal identity and effects of cultural domination
- often feel obligated to write in English



# The Growth of World Literature

## Women's Voices

Feminist writers dramatize women's lack of power in a world controlled by men.



[Return to Time Line](#)

# What Have You Learned?

Choose the word that correctly completes the sentence.

1. Twentieth-century artists were most concerned with \_\_\_\_\_.

- a. tradition
- b. the beauty of nature
- c. experimentation**
- d. social reform

2. The 1900s embraced new ideas in \_\_\_\_\_.

- a. science
- b. economics
- c. psychology
- d. all of the above**

3. After World War I the British people were \_\_\_\_\_.

- a. triumphant
- b. disillusioned**
- c. disappointed
- d. power hungry

[Return to Time Line](#)

**END**



**Feature  
Menu**



**Exit**