

Chief characteristics of Restoration Literature.

Generated: Jan 26, 2026

The restoration period (1660-1770) is one of the most important periods in English Literature because English literary tradition was restored during the restoration of the monarchy. This era marked the return of the monarchy under Charles II. The chief characteristics of Restoration literature are bellowed.

Comedy of Manners: A prominent genre during this period, the comedy of manners focused on the manners, social patterns, and intrigues of the upper classes. Playwrights like William Congreve and William Wycherley excelled in depicting the complexities of relationships and social behaviour.

Sexual Themes: Restoration literature often focuses on the explicit and daring explorations of sexuality. The libertine spirit, emphasizing personal freedom and luxury, was reflected in both drama and poetry.

Political Fluctuation and Allegory: The restoration period was characterized by political violence, and literary works often reflected the anticipations of the time. Allegory and political satire were used to comment on contemporary political events and figures.

Heroic Couplets: The heroic couplet, consisting of rhymed pairs of iambic pentameter lines, became a popular poetic form during the Restoration. It was widely used in satirical works, heroic poetry, and epistles.

Influence of French Literature: French literature, especially the works of Molière and Corneille, impacted Restoration literature. French styles and themes were often replicated and adapted by English writers.

Satire and Wit: Restoration literature is famous for its wit and satire. Influenced by the comedy of manners, writers utilized biting satire to mock the time's social, political, and moral issues.

The characteristics of Restoration literature collectively capture the spirit of the period. The provocative exploration of societal norms, political changes, and the complexities of human relationships marks the restoration literature.