

Features of the Elizabethan or the Renaissance Age.

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Renaissance Age (1500-1660) began in the 14th century and lasted until the 17th century in Europe/The Elizabethan (1558-1603) is named after Queen Elizabeth I (1533-1603). This age is inspired by the revival of classical learning. This was a time of great change in England. It marked the transition from the medieval period to the modern age. This era was characterized by several important features that shaped literature, culture, and society. Below, we will explore key aspects of this remarkable period.

This note will cover the following questions:

- **What are the main features of the Elizabethan or the Renaissance Age?**
- **Or, What are the main features of Elizabethan or Renaissance Drama?**
- **Or, What are the main features of Elizabethan or Renaissance Literature?**
- **Or, write an essay on the theatre and growth of drama during the Elizabethan age.**
- **Or, What do you understand by Renaissance? Discuss its impact on the Elizabethan Drama.**
- **Or, Discuss key features of Elizabethan/Shakespearean drama.**

Revival of Classical Learning:

The Renaissance was a time when people looked back to the ideas and arts of ancient Greece and Rome. This revival of classical learning brought new ideas about life, art, and science. People became more interested in exploring the world around them and understanding it through reason and observation. Christopher Marlowe and William Shakespeare are inspired by classical models, including five-act structures, complex plots, and well-defined characters in their plays.

Humanism: Humanism was one of the central ideas of the Renaissance. It emphasized the importance of human beings, their achievements, and their potential. Unlike the medieval focus on religion and the afterlife, humanism encouraged people to focus on life on earth and to celebrate human creativity. This can be seen in the works of Shakespeare, who wrote about complex characters with deep emotions and ambitions. In "Hamlet," he writes,

What a piece of work is a man! how noble in reason! how infinite in faculty!

This reflects the Renaissance belief in the greatness of humanity.

The flourishing of Literature: The Elizabethan Age is often called the golden age of English literature. This was a time when many great writers, like William Shakespeare, Christopher Marlowe, and Edmund Spenser, created works that are still celebrated today. Their works talked about love, power, and many other important things in life. Shakespeare, in particular, became known for his ability to capture the complexities of human nature. His play "The Merchant of Venice" is an example of how literature during this time could capture intense emotions, intellectuality, and timeless stories. Here, the intellectuality is found when Portia saves Antonio from death, saying,

***Shed thou no blood, nor cut thou less nor more
But just a pound of flesh.***

Change in the English Language:

During this time, the English language changed a lot. Many new words were added, and people started writing in a way that was easier to understand. Writers and poets of the time played a key role in expanding the vocabulary of English. Shakespeare, for example, created many new words that we still use today. This period also saw the standardization of spelling and grammar. This makes English more uniform and easier to read. As a result, more people could enjoy and understand literature. Shakespeare's famous line,

All the world's a stage, and all the men and women merely players.

This evergreen line of "As You Like It" reveals the richness of the English language during this period.

Exploration and Discovery: The Elizabethan Age/The Renaissance was also a time of exploration. Explorers like Sir Francis Drake and Sir Walter Raleigh sailed across the oceans to discover new lands and trade routes. These journeys brought back new ideas and goods to England. The excitement of discovering new places and people is reflected in the literature of the time. In Shakespeare's play The Tempest, the excitement and wonder of finding someone new is revealed in such a way,

How beauteous mankind is! O brave new world, that has such people in 't!

Religious Reformation:

During the Renaissance, there were also big changes in religion. England became a Protestant country, breaking away from the Catholic Church. This change was important and affected many parts of life, including literature and art. Queen Elizabeth worked hard to keep peace in the country. She believed that everyone should be allowed to have their own beliefs. She once said,

I have no desire to make windows into men's souls,

This means she wishes to keep religious matters private.

The Elizabethan or Renaissance Age was a time of big changes in England. People started to think in new ways about learning, human life, language, exploring the world, and religion. These changes helped shape the modern world we live in today.