

Romanticism and Realism

Big Idea

Artistic movements are influenced by the society around them.

Romanticism was in part a reaction to the Industrial Revolution, while advances in science contributed to a new movement called realism. As you read, use a table like the one below to list popular literature from the romantic and realist movements.

Romanticism	Realism



Read to Learn

Romanticism (page 638)

Formulating Questions

To judge whether a work of art was classical or romantic, one might ask:

Does it pay more attention to reason or to _____?

Does it show more respect for technology or for _____?

Does it draw more inspiration from the present or from the _____?

Romanticism was a new movement in art, music, and literature that began in the late 1700s. It was a reaction to the Enlightenment focus on universalism and reason. Instead, romanticism stressed the unique individual, emotions, and the imagination. Romantics were interested in past times before the Industrial Revolution. Their architecture copied medieval styles. Many romantics rebelled against middle-class conventions. They wore long hair and unusual clothes.

Romantic artists tried to reflect their inner feelings and imagination. They abandoned classical reason for warmth and emotion. The French romantic painter Delacroix showed scenes of popular uprisings and exotic animals. The later music of composer Ludwig van Beethoven had powerful, intense melodies. He reflected romantic ideals when he said, “I must write, for what weighs on my heart, I must express.”

Romantic literature shows a similar interest in emotion, the past, and the unfamiliar. *Ivanhoe* by Sir Walter Scott was set in medieval England. Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein* and Edgar Allan Poe’s short stories were filled with imaginative horror. Poems by William Wordsworth and William Blake honored nature and the human soul.

New Age of Science (page 641)**Predicting**

What effect might faith in science have on popular attitudes toward religion?

The Industrial Revolution brought a new interest in scientific research. By the 1830s, new discoveries had brought practical benefits for much of Europe. Europeans developed a great faith in science.

In biology, Louis Pasteur of France suggested that diseases were caused by germs. That made modern medical advances possible.

In chemistry, Dmitry Mendeleev of Russia classified all the known chemical elements on the basis of their atomic weights.

In physics, Michael Faraday of Great Britain made an electrical generator. It was the first step toward the use of electrical current.

These new discoveries led Europeans to have a greater faith in science, which undermined religious faith. **Secularization**, or the indifference to or rejection of religion in the affairs of the world, increased in the 1800s.

Charles Darwin's theory of evolution influenced many fields of science. He published *On the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection* in 1859 and *The Descent of Man* in 1871. In a principle called **organic evolution**, Darwin argued that every species, including humans, evolved from earlier species. In a process he called **natural selection**, the organisms best suited for survival are the ones that live to reproduce. Many people objected to Darwin's ideas as offending their moral values or religious beliefs.

Realism (page 643)**Comparing and Contrasting**

The romantics showed strange, exotic settings. The realists were more interested in

The romantics showed medieval heroes or great events. The realists preferred to show

Realism was another movement in art and literature after about 1850. Influenced by developments in science, the realists believed the world should be shown as it really is. They had an interest in everyday life and ordinary people.

Many realists cared about social issues. They wrote novels about the ways social issues affected their characters.

In France, the novelist Gustav Flaubert wrote *Madame Bovary*. It showed the limitations of life in a French small town.

In Great Britain, author Charles Dickens wrote many novels about the life of the poor during the Industrial Revolution. Novels such as *Oliver Twist* and *David Copperfield* show life among the poor in London. Dickens became immensely popular.

Realist artists believed that no subject was too ugly to paint. The most famous was the French realist painter Gustave Courbet. He painted pictures of factory workers and peasants.

