THE NORTON ANTHOLOGY ENGLISH LITERATURE

THE MIDDLE AGES

VOLUME A

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Preface to the Ninth Edition

A great anthology of English literature is a compact library for life. Its goal is to bring together works of enduring value and to make them accessible, comprehensible, and pleasurable to a wide range of readers. Its success depends on earning the reader's trust: trust in the wisdom of the choices, the accuracy of the texts, and the usefulness and good sense of the apparatus. It is not a place for the display of pedantry, the pushing of cherished theories, or the promotion of a narrow ideological agenda. If it succeeds, if it manages to give its readers access to many of the most remarkable works written in English during centuries of restless creative effort, then it furthers a worthwhile democratic cause, that of openness. What might have been a closed pleasure ground, jealously guarded as the preserve of a privileged elite, becomes open to all. Over fifty years and nine editions, *The Norton Anthology of English Literature* has served this important goal.

The works anthologized here generally form the core of courses that are designed to introduce students to English literature. The selections reach back to the earliest moments of literary creativity in English, when the language itself was still molten, and extend to some of the most recent experiments, when, once again, English seems remarkably fluid and open. That openness—a recurrent characteristic of a language that has never been officially regulated and that has constantly renewed itself—helps to account for the sense of freshness that characterizes the works brought together here.

One of the joys of literature in English is its spectacular abundance. Even within the geographical confines of England, Scotland, Wales, and Ireland, where the majority of texts in this collection originated, one can find more than enough distinguished and exciting works to fill the pages of this anthology many times over. But English literature is not confined to the British Isles; it is a global phenomenon. This border-crossing is not a consequence of modernity alone. It is fitting that among the first works here is *Beowulf*, a powerful epic written in the Germanic language known as Old English about a singularly restless Scandinavian hero. *Beowulf*'s remarkable translator in *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*, Seamus Heaney, was one of the great contemporary masters of English literature—he was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1995—but it would be potentially misleading to call him an "English poet" for he was born in Northern Ireland and was not in fact English. It would be still more misleading to call him a "British poet," as if the British Empire were the most salient fact about the language he spoke and wrote in or the culture by which he was shaped. What matters is that the language in which Heaney wrote is English, and this fact links him

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powerfully with the authors assembled in these volumes, a linguistic munity that stubbornly refuses to fit comfortably within any firm geographical or ethnic or national boundaries. So too, to glance at other authors and writings in the anthology, in the twelfth century, the noblewoman Marie de France wrote her short stories in an Anglo-Norman dialect at home on both sides of the channel; in the sixteenth century William Tyndale, in exile in the Low Countries and inspired by German religious reformers, translated the New Testament from Greek and thereby changed the course of the English language; in the seventeenth century Aphra Behn touched readers with a story that moves from Africa, where its hero is born, to South America, where Behn herself may have witnessed some of the tragic events she describes; and early in the twentieth century Joseph Conrad, born in Ukraine of Polish parents, wrote in eloquent English a celebrated novella whose ironic vision of European empire gave way by the century's end to the voices of those over whom the empire, now in ruins, had once hoped to rule: the Caribbean-born Claude McKay, Louise Bennett, Derek Walcott, Kamau Brathwaite, V. S. Naipaul, and Grace Nichols; the African-born Chinua Achebe, Wole Soyinka, J. M. Coetzee, and Ngugi Wa Thiong'o; and the Indian-born A. K. Ramanujan and Salman Rushdie.

A vital literary culture is always on the move. This principle was the watchword of M. H. Abrams, the distinguished literary critic who first conceived *The Norton Anthology of English Literature,* brought together the original team of editors, and, with characteristic insight, diplomacy, and humor, oversaw seven editions and has graciously offered counsel on subsequent editions. Abrams wisely understood that new scholarly discoveries and the shifting interests of readers constantly alter the landscape of literary history. To stay vital, the anthology, therefore, would need to undergo a process of periodic revision, guided by advice from teachers, as well as students, who view the anthology with a loyal but critical eye. As with past editions, we have benefited from detailed information on the works actually assigned and suggestions for improvements from 155 reviewers. Their participation has been crucial as the editors grapple with the task of strengthening the selection of more traditional texts while adding texts that reflect the expansion of the field of English studies.

The great challenge (and therefore the interest) of the task is inevitably linked to space constraints. The virtually limitless resources of the Web make some of the difficult choices less vexing: in addition to the print anthology, we have created for our readers a supplemental ebook, with more than one thousand texts from the Middle Ages to the turn of the twentieth century. The expansion of the anthology's range by means of this ebook is breathtaking: at no additional cost, readers have access to remarkable works, edited, glossed, and annotated to the exacting scholarly standards and with the sensitivity to classroom use for which the Norton Anthology is renowned. Hence teachers who wish to extend the selections from major authors included in the print anthology will find hundreds of further readings—Milton's *Comus* and *Samson Agonistes,* for example, or Conrad's *Youth*—in the supplemental ebook. At the same time, the ebook contains marvelous works that might otherwise be lost from view: among them, to cite several of my personal favorites, Gascoigne's "Woodmanship," Wycherley's *The Country Wife*, Mary Robinson's "The Camp," and Edward Lear's "The Jumblies."

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In addition, there are many fascinating topical clusters—"The First sade: Sanctifying War," "Genius," "Romantic Literature and Wartime," "Victorian Issues: Education," "Imagining Ireland," to name only a few—all designed to draw readers into larger cultural contexts and to expose them to a wide spectrum of voices.

With each edition, *The Norton Anthology of English Literature* has offered a broadened canon without sacrificing major writers and a selection of complete longer texts in which readers can immerse themselves. Perhaps the most emblematic of these great texts are the epics *Beowulf* and *Paradise Lost.* Among the many other complete longer works in the Ninth Edition are *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* (new in Simon Armitage's spectacular translation), Sir Thomas More's *Utopia*, Sir Philip Sidney's *Defense of Poesy*, William Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night* and *King Lear*, Samuel Johnson's *Rasselas*, Aphra Behn's *Oroonoko*, Robert Louis Stevenson's *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, Rudyard Kipling's *The Man Who Would Be King*, Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*, Virginia Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway*, James Joyce's *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, Samuel Beckett's *Waiting for Godot*, Harold Pinter's *The Dumb Waiter*, and Tom Stoppard's *Arcadia*. To augment the number of complete longer works instructors can assign, and—a special concern—better to represent the achievements of novelists, the publisher is making available the full list of Norton Critical Editions, more than 220 titles, including such frequently assigned novels as Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*, Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*, Charles Dickens's *Hard Times*, and Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*. A Norton Critical Edition may be packaged with either volume or any individual paperback-split volume for free.

We have in this edition continued to expand the selection of writing by women in several historical periods. The sustained work of scholars in recent years has recovered dozens of significant authors who had been marginalized or neglected by a male-dominated literary tradition and has deepened our understanding of those women writers who had managed, against considerable odds, to claim a place in that tradition. The First Edition of the Norton Anthology included 6 women writers; this Ninth Edition includes 74, of whom 8 are newly added and 9 are reselected or expanded. Poets and dramatists whose names were scarcely mentioned even in the specialized literary histories of earlier generations—Aemilia Lanyer, Lady Mary Wroth, Elizabeth Cary, Margaret Cavendish, Mary Leapor, Anna Letitia Barbauld, Charlotte Smith, Letitia Elizabeth Landon, Mary Elizabeth Coleridge, Mina Loy, and many others—now appear in the company of their male contemporaries. There are in addition four complete long prose works by women—Aphra Behn's *Oroonoko*, Eliza Haywood's *Fantomina*, Jane Austen's *Love and Friendship*, and Virginia Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway*—along with new selections from such celebrated fiction writers as Maria Edgeworth, Jean Rhys, Katherine Mansfield, Doris Lessing, Margaret Atwood, Kiran Desai, and Zadie Smith.

Building on an innovation introduced as early as the First Edition, the editors have expanded the array of clusters that gather together short texts illuminating the cultural, historical, intellectual, and literary concerns of each of the periods. We have designed these clusters with three aims: to make them lively and accessible, to ensure that they are possible to teach effectively

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in a class meeting or two, and to heighten their relevance to the surrou[nding] works of literature. Hence, for example, in the Sixteenth Century section, a new cluster on "Renaissance Love and Desire" enables readers to situate the celebrated achievements of Sidney and Shakespeare in the larger context of a culture obsessed with the fashioning of passionate lyrics. Similarly, in the Eighteenth Century section, a grouping of texts called "Low People and High People" provides perspective on the system of rank and class and brings together such celebrated elite writers as Fielding and Sterne with the working-class Stephen Duck and Mary Collier. And in the Romantic Period, a new cluster on "The Slave Trade and the Literature of Abolition" joins Olaudah Equiano's searing autobiographical account of enslavement with powerful texts by William Cowper, Hannah More, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, and others that together mobilized popular support for abolition. These are only a few of the clusters in print and in the supplemental ebook. Across the volumes the clusters provide an exciting way to broaden the field of the literary and to set masterpieces in a wider cultural, social, and historical framework

Now, as in the past, cultures define themselves by the songs they sing and the stories they tell. But the central importance of visual media in contemporary culture has heightened our awareness of the ways in which songs and stories have always been closely linked to the images that societies have fashioned and viewed. The Ninth Edition of *The Norton Anthology of English Literature* features sixty pages of color plates (in seven color inserts) and more than 120 black-and-white illustrations throughout the volumes. In selecting visual material—from the Sutton Hoo treasure of the seventh century to Yinka Shonibare's *Nelson's Ship in a Bottle* in the twenty-first century—the editors sought to provide images that conjure up, whether directly or indirectly, the individual writers in each section; that relate specifically to individual works in the anthology; and that shape and illuminate the culture of a particular literary period. We have tried to choose visually striking images that will interest students and provoke discussion, and our captions draw attention to important details and cross-reference related texts in the anthology.

Period-by-Period Revisions

The Middle Ages, edited by James Simpson and Alfred David, has taken on a striking new look, with a major revision and expansion of its selections. The heart of the Anglo-Saxon portion is the great epic *Beowulf,* in an acclaimed translation, specially commissioned for *The Norton Anthology of English Literature,* by Seamus Heaney. The array of Anglo-Saxon texts includes Alfred David's new verse translations of the poignant, visionary *Dream of the Rood,* the elegiac *Wanderer,* and *The Wife's Lament.* A new Irish Literature selection features a tale from *The Tain* and a group of vivid ninth-century lyrics. The Anglo-Norman section—a key bridge between the Anglo-Saxon period and the time of Chaucer—includes an illuminating cluster on the Romance, with three stories by Marie de France (two of them new and all three from a newly chosen translation) and *Sir Orfeo,* a comic version of the Orpheus and Eurydice story. The Middle English section centers, as always, on Chaucer, with a generous selection of texts carefully glossed and annotated so as to heighten their accessibility. New to the Ninth

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Edition is a brilliant, specially revised verse translation of *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* by Simon Armitage, one of the foremost poets and translators of our time. In addition, we include for the first time Thomas Hoccleve's *Compleinte,* a startlingly personal account of Hoccleve's attempt to reintegrate himself with his readership after a period of mental instability. Among the highlights of the revised and expanded medieval section of the ebook—too extensive to enumerate here—is a new, fully annotated edition of the great fifteenth-century morality play, *Mankind.*

The Sixteenth Century, edited by Stephen Greenblatt and George Logan, features seven complete longer texts: More's *Utopia* (with two letters from More to Peter Giles), Book 1 of Spenser's *Faerie Queene,* Marlowe's *Hero and Leander* and *Doctor Faustus,* Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night* and *King Lear,* and—in response to many requests—the whole of Sidney's *Defense of Poesy.* A new cluster, "Renaissance Love and Desire," enables readers to sample the emotional range of Tudor love lyrics and to savor the astonishingly high level of skill reached under the influence of Petrarch and of native English traditions. The ebook further enriches this topic by providing the originals (in Italian and modern English translation) of key Petrarchan poems by Wyatt and Surrey. Also new to the ebook are Skelton's brooding, paranoidal vision of life in the orbit of Henry VIII, "The Bowge of Court," and a greatly expanded cluster of texts of exploration and discovery in "The Wider World."

The Early Seventeenth Century. At the heart of this section, edited by Katharine Eisaman Maus and Barbara Lewalski, is John Milton's *Paradise Lost,* presented in its entirety. Other complete longer works include John Donne's soul-searching *Satire* 3 and, new to this edition, his hauntingly eloquent *The Anatomy of the World: The First Anniversary;* Aemilia Lanyer's country-house poem "The Description of Cookham"; Ben Jonson's *Volpone* and the Cary-Morison ode; John Webster's tragedy *The Duchess of Malfi;* and Milton's "Lycidas." Significant additions have been made to the works of Mary Wroth and Robert Burton; the Puritan William Gouge added to the topic "Gender Relations: Conflict and Counsel"; and William Harvey (on the circulation of the blood) added to the topic "Inquiry and Experience." Headnotes, introductions, and bibliographies have all been revised. And among the highlights of the ebook are a substantial selection from Donne's startling defense of suicide, the *Biathanatos;* Ben Jonson's *Masque of Blackness;* and the complete text of the first tragedy in English from the pen of a woman, Elizabeth Cary's *The Tragedy of Mariam.*

The Restoration and the Eighteenth Century. The impressive array of complete longer texts in this section, edited by James Noggle and Lawrence Lipking, includes Dryden's satires *Absalom and Achitophel* and *MacFlecknoe;* Aphra Behn's novel *Oroonoko;* Congreve's comedy *The Way of the World;* Pope's *Essay on Criticism, The Rape of the Lock,* and *Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot;* Gay's *Beggar's Opera;* Eliza Haywood's sly novella of sexual role-playing, *Fantomina;* Hogarth's graphic satire "Marriage A-la-Mode"; Johnson's *Vanity of Human Wishes* and *Rasselas;* Gray's "Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard"; and Goldsmith's "The Deserted Village." There are

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new texts by Henry Fielding, Samuel Johnson, Matthew Prior, anc rence Sterne. Thomas Chatterton, the doomed poet and forger, is represented for the first time, as are Mary Barber and Mary Jones, who join the ranks of such distinguished women writers as Aphra Behn, Mary Astell, Anne Finch, Eliza Haywood, Lady Mary Wortley Montagu (with a new selection of Turkish Embassy letters), Anne Ingram, Mary Leapor, and Frances Burney. An exciting new topical cluster, "Low People and High People"—the phrase comes from Fielding's *Joseph Andrews*—enables readers to sample the new kinds of writings, many by middle- and lower-class authors, that were produced in this period to appeal to the emerging phenomenon of "the common reader." Among the many features of the corresponding ebook section are extensive readings in eighteenth-century aesthetics (with texts on grace, on the general and the particular, and on genius); topical clusters on daily life in London, slavery and the slave trade, the plurality of worlds, and travel, trade, and the expansion of empire; and the complete text of William Wycherley's scandalous Restoration comedy *The Country Wife*.

The Romantic Period, edited by Deidre Shauna Lynch and Jack Stillinger, has been extensively revised; every text, headnote, and annotation has been reconsidered. The result is a dramatic reimagining of the entire period, from the lively and illuminating opening selection of popular ballads to the new inclusion at the close of Letitia Landon's "Fairy of the Fountains," a poem of female revenge and female monstrosity that enigmatically rewrites Keats's *Lamia* and Coleridge's *Christabel*. There are new works in this edition for almost every author, from Wordsworth's "Goody Blake and Harry Gill," where the stylistic revolution of the *Lyrical Ballads* is at its most apparent, to Felicia Hemans's ambitious and exciting dramatic monologue "Properzia Rossi." The addition of Byron's *Vision of Judgment* and Shelley's *The Mask of Anarchy* provides eloquent evidence that the genius of Romantic poets was often at its height when they threw themselves into the tumult of the era, writing for political causes or scoring points against their polemical enemies. Other additions—including selections from Coleridge's *Table Talk*, Shelley's *Keepsake* essay "On Love," and Hazlitt's "Coriolanus"—make it clear that an era scholars used to represent solely in terms of the glory of its poetry was also distinctive for exciting experiments in prose.

The revision of this period in the anthology is not only a matter of brilliant additions. The facing-page comparison in the new section on "Versions of *The Prelude*" allows readers to see Wordsworth as a reviser and to gauge the significance of the changes he wrought. By replacing the 1850 *Prelude* with the 1805 *Prelude*, the Norton Anthology provides a text that shows Wordsworth immediately engaged with his Romantic contemporaries. This sense of engagement—as if windows in an ornate room had been thrown open to the world outside—extends to the new topical cluster on "The Slave Trade and the Literature of Abolition," which joins "The Revolution Controversy and the 'Spirit of the Age,'" with the addition of Gillray's searing political prints, and "The Gothic and the Development of a Mass Readership." A new ebook topic, "Reviewer vs. Poet in the Romantic Period," conveys the rough-and-tumble of literary battles, while another new ebook topic, "Romantic Literature and Wartime," documents Romantic writers' pointed efforts to make literature do justice to the wider world.

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The Victorian Age, edited by Catherine Robson and Carol Christ, (with a revised introduction that features expanded discussions of fiction and the cultural role of poetry. A new cluster on the Pre-Raphaelites extends the impressive coverage of poetry and the visual arts. Among the many complete longer works included here are major poems by Elizabeth Barrett Browning, Alfred, Lord Tennyson, Robert Browning, Dante Gabriel Rossetti, Christina Rossetti, William Morris, Algernon Charles Swinburne, Gerard Manley Hopkins, and Ernest Dowson. Plays include Oscar Wilde's *The Importance of Being Earnest* and Bernard Shaw's controversial drama on prostitution, *Mrs Warren's Profession.* New among the prose selections is Arthur Conan Doyle's *The Speckled Band*, the thriller that the author himself chose as his favorite. The piece joins a distinguished array of complete prose works, including Elizabeth Gaskell's *The Old Nurse's Story,* Robert Louis Stevenson's *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde,* and Rudyard Kipling's *The Man Who Would Be King.* From the inception of the Norton Anthology, the Victorian section has been innovative in bringing together a wide array of texts—works of poetry and fiction, proclamations, official reports, autobiographical memoirs, scientific papers, and the like—that enable readers to grapple with the period's most resonant and often fiercely contentious issues. Among the areas of focus are evolution, industrialism, gender and sexuality, and empire. The eminently teachable clusters are supplemented in the extensive ebook section by a new topic on Victorian education that brings together powerful reflections by Newman, Mill, and others with key passages from such works as *Hard Times, Alice's Adventures in Wonderland,* and *Jude the Obscure.*

The Twentieth Century and After. The editors, Jahan Ramazani and Jon Stallworthy, have undertaken a root-and-branch reconsideration, leading to a dramatic revision of the entire section. Its spine, as it were, consists of three modernist masterpieces: Virginia Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway*, James Joyce's *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, and Samuel Beckett's *Waiting for Godot.* These complete works are surrounded by a dazzling choice of other fiction and drama, including, among others, Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness;* powerful stories by D. H. Lawrence, Katherine Mansfield, Jean Rhys, Doris Lessing, and Nadine Gordimer; and Harold Pinter's *The Dumb Waiter* and Tom Stoppard's *Arcadia.* A generous representation of poetry centers on a substantial selection of key works by Thomas Hardy, William Butler Yeats, and T. S. Eliot, and extends out to a wide array of other poets, from A. E. Housman, Wilfred Owen, and W. H. Auden to Philip Larkin, Derek Walcott, and Seamus Heaney. New to the cluster on "Modernist Manifestos" is Mina Loy's much-requested "Songs to Joannes," and there are new poems by Grace Nichols, Carol Ann Duffy, Paul Muldoon, Margaret Atwood, and Les Murray. Other new fiction includes works by Jean Rhys, Chinua Achebe, Margaret Atwood, Ian McEwan, Hanif Kureishi, Kiran Desai, and Zadie Smith. There are also new images, including those in the topical cluster on World War II, and new nonfiction selections, including texts by Salman Rushdie, Hanif Kureishi, and, in a daring experimental vein, M. Nourbese Philip. The much-praised cluster "Nation, Race, and Language" has been expanded. The voices in this cluster—Claude McKay, Louise Bennett, Kamau Brathwaite, Wole Soyinka, Ngugi Wa Thiong'o, M. Nourbese Philip, Salman Rushdie,

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Grace Nichols, and Hanif Kureishi—bear eloquent witness to the glob fusion of English, the urgency of unresolved issues of nation and identity, and the rich complexity of literary history.

Editorial Procedures and Format

The Ninth Edition adheres to the principles that have always characterized *The Norton Anthology of English Literature.* Period introductions, headnotes, and annotations are designed to enhance students' reading and, without imposing an interpretation, to give students the information they need to understand each text. The aim of these editorial materials is to make the anthology self-sufficient, so that it can be read anywhere—in a coffeeshop, on a bus, under a tree.

The Norton Anthology of English Literature prides itself on both the scholarly accuracy and the readability of its texts. To ease students' encounter with some works, we have normalized spelling and capitalization in texts up to and including the Romantic period—for the most part they now follow the conventions of modern English. We leave unaltered, however, texts in which such modernizing would change semantic or metrical qualities. From the Victorian period onward, we have used the original spelling and punctuation. We continue other editorial procedures that have proved useful in the past. After each work, we cite the date of first publication on the right; in some instances, this date is followed by the date of a revised edition for which the author was responsible. Dates of composition, when they differ from those of publication and when they are known, are provided on the left. We have used square brackets to indicate titles supplied by the editors for the convenience of readers. Whenever a portion of a text has been omitted, we have indicated that omission with three asterisks. If the omitted portion is important for following the plot or argument, we have provided a brief summary within the text or in a footnote. Finally, we have reconsidered annotations throughout and increased the number of marginal glosses for archaic, dialect, or unfamiliar words.

Thanks to the thorough work of James Simpson, with help from Lara Bovilsky of the University of Oregon, the Ninth Edition provides a more useful "Literary Terminology" appendix, recast as a quick-reference alphabetical glossary with examples from works in the anthology. We have also overhauled and updated the General Bibliography that appears in the print volumes, as well as the period and author bibliographies, which now appear in the supplemental ebook, where they can be more easily searched and updated.

Additional Resources from the Publisher

For students using *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*, the publisher provides a wealth of resources on the free StudySpace website (wwnorton.com/nael). Students who activate the free password included in each new copy of the anthology gain access both to the supplemental ebook and to StudySpace, where they will find approximately fifty multiple-choice reading-comprehension quizzes on widely taught individual works with extensive feedback; summaries of the period introductions; period review quizzes with feedback; a new "Literary Places" feature that uses images, maps, and

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Google Tours tools to offer students a practical way to (virtually) visi Lake District, Dover Beach, Canterbury, and other literary places; art galleries—one per period—including author portraits, interactive timelines, and over three hours of spoken-word and musical recordings. The rich gathering of content on StudySpace is designed to help students understand individual works and appreciate the places, sounds, and sights of literature.

The publisher also provides extensive instructor-support materials. Designed to enhance large or small lecture environments, the Instructor Resource Disc, expanded for the Ninth Edition, features more than 300 images with explanatory captions; PowerPoint slides for each period introduction and for most topic clusters; and audio recordings (MP3). Much praised by both new and experienced instructors, *Teaching with* The Norton Anthology of English Literature*: A Guide for Instructors* by Sondra Archimedes (University of California–Santa Cruz), Laura Runge (University of South Florida), Philip Schwyzer (University of Exeter), Leslie Ritchie (Queen's University), and Scott-Morgan Straker (Queen's University) provides extensive help, from planning a course and developing a syllabus and course objectives to preparing exams. Guide entries provide a "hook" to start class discussion; a Quick Read section to refresh instructors on essential information about a text or author; Teaching Suggestions that call out interesting textual or contextual features; Teaching Clusters of suggested groups or pairs of texts; and Discussion Questions. To help instructors integrate the anthology's rich supplemental ebook, the Guide features new entries for online texts and clusters. The Guide also offers revised material on using technology in the classroom, with suggestions for teaching the anthology's multimedia with the texts and for incorporating the media into traditional or distance-learning courses. For the first time, the Guide will also be made available in a searchable online format. Finally, Norton Coursepacks bring high-quality Norton digital media into a new or existing online course. The coursepacks include all content from the StudySpace website, short-answer questions with suggested answers, and a bank of discussion questions adapted from the Guide. Norton's Coursepacks are available in a variety of formats, including Blackboard/WebCT, Desire2Learn, Angel, and Moodle at no cost to instructors or students.

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The Middle Ages to ca. 1485

43–ca. 420:	Roman invasion and occupation of Britain
ca. 450:	Anglo-Saxon Conquest
597:	St. Augustine arrives in Kent; beginning of Anglo-Saxon conversion to Christianity
871–899:	Reign of King Alfred
1066:	Norman Conquest
1154–1189:	Reign of Henry II
ca. 1200:	Beginnings of Middle English literature
1360–1400:	Geoffrey Chaucer; *Piers Plowman*; *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*
1485:	William Caxton's printing of Sir Thomas Malory's *Morte Darthur*, one of the first books printed in England

The Middle Ages designates the time span roughly from the collapse of the Roman Empire to the Renaissance and Reformation. The adjective "medieval," coined from Latin *medium* (middle) and *aevum* (age), refers to whatever was made, written, or thought during the Middle Ages. The Renaissance was so named by nineteenth-century historians and critics because they associated it with an outburst of creativity attributed to a "rebirth" or revival of Latin and, especially, of Greek learning and literature. The word "Reformation" designates the powerful religious movement that began in the early sixteenth century and repudiated the supreme authority of the Roman Catholic Church. The Renaissance was seen as spreading from Italy in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries to the rest of Europe, whereas the Reformation began in Germany and quickly affected all of Europe to a greater or lesser degree. The very idea of a Renaissance or rebirth, however, implies something dormant or lacking in the preceding era. More recently, there have been two nonexclusive tendencies in our understanding of the medieval period and what follows. Some scholars emphasize the continuities between

Pilgrims leaving Canterbury, ca. 1420. For more information about this image, see the color insert in this volume.

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the Middle Ages and the later time now often called the Early Mo
Period. Others emphasize the ways in which sixteenth-century write... some sense "created" the Middle Ages, in order to highlight what they saw as the brilliance of their own time. Medieval authors, of course, did not think of themselves as living in the "middle"; they sometimes expressed the idea that the world was growing old and that theirs was a declining age, close to the end of time. Yet art, literature, and science flourished during the Middle Ages, rooted in the Christian culture that preserved, transmitted, and transformed classical tradition.

The works covered in this section of the anthology encompass a period of more than eight hundred years, from Cædmon's *Hymn* at the end of the seventh century to *Everyman* at the beginning of the sixteenth. The date 1485, the year of the accession of Henry VII and the beginning of the Tudor dynasty, is an arbitrary but convenient one to mark the "end" of the Middle Ages in England.

Although the Roman Catholic Church provided continuity, the period was one of enormous historical, social, and linguistic change. To emphasize these changes and the events underlying them, we have divided the period into three primary sections: Anglo-Saxon Literature, Anglo-Norman Literature, and Middle English Literature in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries. The Anglo-Saxon invaders, who began their conquest of the southeastern part of Britain around 450, spoke an early form of the language we now call Old English. Old English displays its kinship with other Germanic languages (German or Dutch, for example) much more clearly than does contemporary British and American English, of which Old English is the ancestor. As late as the tenth century, part of an Old Saxon poem written on the Continent was transcribed and transliterated into the West Saxon dialect of Old English without presenting problems to its English readers. In form and content Old English literature also has much in common with other Germanic literatures with which it shared a body of heroic as well as Christian stories. The major characters in *Beowulf* are pagan Danes and Geats, and the only connection to England is an obscure allusion to the ancestor of one of the kings of the Angles.

The changes already in progress in the language and culture of Anglo-Saxon England were greatly accelerated by the Norman Conquest of 1066. The ascendancy of a French-speaking ruling class had the effect of adding a vast number of French loan words to the English vocabulary. The conquest resulted in new forms of political organization and administration, architecture, and literary expression. In the twelfth century, through the interest of the Anglo-Normans in British history before the Anglo-Saxon Conquest, not only England but all of Western Europe became fascinated with a legendary hero named Arthur who makes his earliest appearances in Celtic literature. King Arthur and his knights became a staple subject of medieval French, English, and German literature. Selections from Latin, French, and Old Irish, as well as from Early Middle English have been included here to give a sense of the cross-currents of languages and literatures in Anglo-Norman England and to provide background for later English literature in all periods.

Literature in English was performed orally and written throughout the Middle Ages, but the awareness of and pride in a uniquely *English* literature

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did not actually exist before the late fourteenth century. In 1336 Edwar began a war to enforce his claims to the throne of France; the war continued intermittently for more than one hundred years until finally the English were driven from all their French territories, except for the port of Calais, in 1453. One result of the war and these losses was a keener sense on the part of England's nobility of their English heritage and identity. Toward the close of the fourteenth century English finally began to displace French as the language for conducting business in Parliament and much official correspondence. Although the high nobility continued to speak French by preference, they were certainly bilingual, whereas some of the earlier Norman kings had known no English at all. It was becoming possible to obtain patronage for literary achievement in English. The decision of Chaucer (d. 1400) to emulate French and Italian poetry in his own vernacular is an indication of the change taking place in the status of English, and Chaucer's works were greatly to enhance the prestige of English as a vehicle for literature of high ambition. He was acclaimed by fifteenth-century poets as the embellisher of the English tongue; later writers called him the English Homer and the father of English poetry. His friend John Gower (ca. 1330–1408) wrote long poems in French and Latin before producing his last major work, the *Confessio Amantis* (The Lover's Confession), which in spite of its Latin title is composed in English.

The third and longest of the three primary sections, Middle English Literature in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries, is thus not only a chronological and linguistic division but implies a new sense of English as a literary medium that could compete with French and Latin in elegance and seriousness.

Book production throughout the medieval period was an expensive process. Until the invention of moveable type in the mid-fifteenth century (introduced into England by Caxton in 1476), medieval books were reproduced by hand in manuscript (literally "written by hand"). While paper became increasingly common for less expensive manuscripts in the fifteenth century, manuscripts were until then written on carefully prepared animal (usually calf or sheep) skin, known as parchment or vellum. More expensive books could be illuminated both by colored and calligraphic lettering, and by visual images.

The institutions of book production developed across the period. In the Anglo-Saxon period monasteries were the main centers of book production and storage. Until their dissolution in the 1530s, monastic and other religious houses continued to produce books, but from the early fourteenth century, particularly in London, commercial book-making enterprises came into being. These were loose organizations of various artisans such as parchmentmakers, scribes, flourishers, illuminators, and binders, who usually lived in the same neighborhoods in towns. A bookseller or dealer (usually a member of one of these trades) would coordinate the production of books to order for wealthy patrons, sometimes distributing the work of copying to different scribes, who would be responsible for different gatherings, or quires, of the same book. Such shops could call upon the services of professional scribes working in the bureaucracies of the royal court.

The market for books also changed across the period: while monasteries, other religious houses, and royal courts continued to fund the production

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of books, from the Anglo-Norman period books were also produced fo sometimes by) noble and gentry households. From the fourteenth century the market was widened yet further, with wealthy urban patrons also ordering books. Some of these books were dedicated to single works, some largely to single genres; most were much more miscellaneous, containing texts of many kinds and (particularly in the Anglo-Norman period) written in different languages (especially Latin, French, and English). Only a small proportion of medieval books survive; large numbers were destroyed at the time of the dissolution of the monasteries in the 1530s.

Texts in Old English, Early Middle English, the more difficult texts in later Middle English (*Sir Gawain and the Green Knight, Piers Plowman*), and those in other languages are given in translation. Chaucer and other Middle English works may be read in the original, even by the beginner, with the help of marginal glosses and notes. These texts have been spelled in a way that is intended to aid the reader. Analyses of the sounds and grammar of Middle English and of Old and Middle English prosody are presented on pages 19–25.

ANGLO-SAXON LITERATURE

From the first to the fifth century, England was a province of the Roman Empire and was named Britannia after its Celtic-speaking inhabitants, the Britons. The Britons adapted themselves to Roman civilization, of which the ruins survived to impress the poet of *The Wanderer*, who refers to them as "the ancient works of giants." The withdrawal of the Roman legions during the fifth century, in a vain attempt to protect Rome itself from the threat of Germanic conquest, left the island vulnerable to seafaring Germanic invaders. These belonged primarily to three related tribes, the Angles, the Saxons, and the Jutes. The name *English* derives from the Angles, and the names of the counties Essex, Sussex, and Wessex refer to the territories occupied by the East, South, and West Saxons.

The Anglo-Saxon occupation was no sudden conquest but extended over decades of fighting against the native Britons. The latter were, finally, largely confined to the mountainous region of Wales, where the modern form of their language is spoken alongside English to this day. The Britons had become Christians in the fourth century after the conversion of Emperor Constantine along with most of the rest of the Roman Empire, but for about 150 years after the beginning of the invasion, Christianity was maintained only in the remoter regions where the as yet pagan Anglo-Saxons failed to penetrate. In the year 597, however, a Benedictine monk (afterward St. Augustine of Canterbury) was sent by Pope Gregory as a missionary to King Ethelbert of Kent, the most southerly of the kingdoms into which England was then divided, and about the same time missionaries from Ireland began to preach Christianity in the north. Within 75 years the island was once more predominantly Christian. Before Christianity there had been no books. The impact of Christianity on literacy is evident from the fact that the first extended written specimen of the Old English (Anglo-Saxon) language is a code of laws promulgated by Ethelbert, the first English Christian king.

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In the centuries that followed the conversion, England produced many distinguished churchmen. One of the earliest of these was Bede, whose Latin *Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, which tells the story of the conversion and of the English church, was completed in 731; this remains one of our most important sources of knowledge about the period. In the next generation Alcuin (735–804), a man of wide culture, became the friend and adviser of the Frankish emperor Charlemagne, whom he assisted in making the Frankish court a great center of learning; thus by the year 800 English culture had developed so richly that it overflowed its insular boundaries.

Lindisfarne Gospels. Opening of Gospel of St. Matthew, ca. 698. The veil of mysteries is drawn aside, and the author of the gospel text copies his book as if by divine dictation.

In the ninth century the Christian Anglo-Saxons were themselves subjected to new Germanic invasions by the Danes who in their longboats repeatedly ravaged the coast, sacking Bede's monastery among others. Such a raid late in the tenth century inspired *The Battle of Maldon*, the last of the Old English heroic poems. The Danes also occupied the northern part of the island, threatening to overrun the rest. They were stopped by Alfred, king of the West Saxons from 871 to 899, who for a time united all the kingdoms of southern England. This most active king was also an enthusiastic patron of literature. He himself translated various works from Latin, the most important of which was Boethius's *Consolation of Philosophy*, a sixth-century Roman work also translated in the fourteenth century by Chaucer. Alfred probably also instigated a translation of Bede's *History* and the beginning of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*: this year-by-year record in Old English of important events in England was maintained at one monastery until the middle of the twelfth century. Practically all of Old English poetry is preserved in copies made in the West Saxon dialect after the reign of Alfred.

Old English Poetry

The Anglo-Saxon invaders brought with them a tradition of oral poetry (see "Bede and Cædmon's *Hymn*," p. 29). Because nothing was written down before the conversion to Christianity, we have only circumstantial evidence of what that poetry must have been like. Aside from a few short inscriptions on small artifacts, the earliest records in the English language are in manuscripts produced at monasteries and other religious establishments, beginning in the seventh century. Literacy was mainly restricted to servants of the church, and so it is natural that the bulk of Old English literature deals with religious subjects and is mostly drawn from Latin sources. Under the

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expensive conditions of manuscript production, few texts were w[ritten] down that did not pertain directly to the work of the church. Most of Old English poetry is contained in just four manuscripts.

Germanic heroic poetry continued to be performed orally in alliterative verse and was at times used to describe current events. *The Battle of Brunanburh,* which celebrates an English victory over the Danes in traditional alliterative verse, is preserved in the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle. The Battle of Maldon* (in the supplemental ebook) commemorates a Viking victory in which the Christian English invoke the ancient code of honor that obliges a warrior to avenge his slain lord or to die beside him.

These poems show that the aristocratic heroic and kinship values of Germanic society continued to inspire both clergy and laity in the Christian era. As represented in the relatively small body of Anglo-Saxon heroic poetry that survives, this world shares many characteristics with the heroic world described by Homer. Nations are reckoned as groups of people related by kinship rather than by geographical areas, and kinship is the basis of the heroic code. The tribe is ruled by a chieftain who is called *king*, a word that has "kin" for its root. The *lord* (a word derived from Old English *hlaf,* "loaf," plus *weard*, "protector") surrounds himself with a band of retainers (many of them his blood kindred) who are members of his household. He leads his men in battle and rewards them with the spoils; royal generosity was one of the most important aspects of heroic behavior. In return, the retainers are obligated to fight for their lord to the death, and if he is slain, to avenge him or die in the attempt. Blood vengeance is regarded as a sacred duty, and in poetry, everlasting shame awaits those who fail to observe it.

Even though the heroic world of poetry could be invoked to rally resistance to the Viking invasions, it was already remote from the Christian world of Anglo-Saxon England. Nevertheless, Christian writers like the *Beowulf* poet were fascinated by the distant culture of their pagan ancestors and by the inherent conflict between the heroic code and a religion that teaches that we should "forgive those who trespass against us" and that "all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword." The *Beowulf* poet looks back on that ancient world with admiration for the courage of which it was capable and at the same time with elegiac sympathy for its inevitable doom.

For Anglo-Saxon poetry, it is difficult and probably futile to draw a line between "heroic" and "Christian," for the best poetry crosses that boundary. Much of the Christian poetry is also cast in the heroic mode: although the Anglo-Saxons adapted themselves readily to the ideals of Christianity, they did not do so without adapting Christianity to their own heroic ideal. Thus Moses and St. Andrew, Christ and God the Father are represented in the style of heroic verse. In *The Dream of the Rood*, the Cross speaks of Christ as "this young man, . . . strong and courageous." In Cædmon's *Hymn* the creation of heaven and earth is seen as a mighty deed, an "establishment of wonders." Anglo-Saxon heroines, too, are portrayed in the heroic manner. St. Helena, who leads an expedition to the Holy Land to discover the true Cross, is described as a "battle-queen." The biblical narrative related in the Anglo-Saxon poem *Judith* is recast in the terms of Germanic heroic poetry. Christian and heroic ideals are poignantly blended in *The Wanderer,* which laments the separation from one's lord and kinsmen and the transience of all earthly treasures. Love between man and woman, as described by the female

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speaker of *The Wife's Lament*, is disrupted by separation, exile, and the ice of kinfolk.

The world of Old English poetry is often elegiac. Men are said to be cheerful in the mead hall, but even there they think of war, of possible triumph but more possible failure. Romantic love—one of the principal topics of later literature—appears hardly at all. Even so, at some of the bleakest moments, the poets powerfully recall the return of spring. The blade of the magic sword with which Beowulf has killed Grendel's mother in her sinister underwater lair begins to melt, "as ice melts / when the Father eases the fetters off the frost / and unravels the water ropes, He who wields power."

The poetic diction, formulaic phrases, and repetitions of parallel syntactic structures, which are determined by the versification, are difficult to reproduce in modern translation. A few features may be anticipated here and studied in the text of Cædmon's *Hymn*, printed below (pp. 29–32) with interlinear translation.

Poetic language is created out of a special vocabulary that contains a multiplicity of terms for *lord, warrior, spear, shield*, and so on. Synecdoche and metonymy are common figures of speech, as when "keel" is used for *ship* or "iron" for *sword*. A particularly striking effect is achieved by the kenning, a compound of two words in place of another as when *sea* becomes "whale-road" or *body* is called "life-house." The figurative use of language finds playful expression in poetic riddles, of which about one hundred survive. Common (and sometimes uncommon) creatures, objects, or phenomena are described in an enigmatic passage of alliterative verse, and the reader must guess their identity. Sometimes they are personified and ask, "What is my name?"

Because special vocabulary and compounds are among the chief poetic effects, the verse is constructed in such a way as to show off such terms by creating a series of them in apposition. In the second sentence of Cædmon's *Hymn*, for example, God is referred to five times appositively as "he," "holy Creator," "mankind's Guardian," "eternal Lord," and "Master Almighty." This use of parallel and appositive expressions, known as *variation*, gives the verse a highly structured and musical quality.

The overall effect of the language is to formalize and elevate speech. Instead of being straightforward, it moves at a slow and stately pace with steady indirection. A favorite mode of this indirection is irony. A grim irony pervades heroic poetry even at the level of diction where *fighting* is called "battle-play." A favorite device, known by the rhetorical term *litotes*, is ironic understatement. After the monster Grendel has slaughtered the Danes in the great hall Heorot, it stands deserted. The poet observes, "It was easy then to meet with a man / shifting himself to a safer distance."

More than a figure of thought, irony is also a mode of perception in Old English poetry. In a famous passage, the Wanderer articulates the theme of *Ubi sunt?* (where are they now?): "Where did the steed go? Where the young warrior? Where the treasure-giver? . . ." *Beowulf* is full of ironic balances and contrasts—between the aged Danish king and the youthful Beowulf, and between Beowulf, the high-spirited young warrior at the beginning, and Beowulf, the gray-haired king at the end, facing the dragon and death.

The formal and dignified speech of Old English poetry was always distant from the everyday language of the Anglo-Saxons, and this poetic idiom

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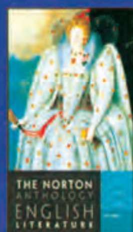

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