

- and is often cited as one of the earliest books to resemble the modern novel.
- 1048 Omar Khayyam, a Persian mathematician and poet, is born. His poetic works are later collected—along with some works of suspect attribution—in *The Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam*, a key work of Persian literature.
- c. 1220 Snorri Sturluson creates the first comprehensive written collection of Norse mythology with the completion of the *Prose Edda*.
- 1265 Italian poet Dante Alighieri, creator of the epic known as *The Divine Comedy*, is born.
- 1439 German metalworker Johann Gutenberg creates the first functional printing press, resulting in the ability to mass-produce copies of literature easily and cheaply instead of by hand.
- 1500–1799**
- 1558 Queen Elizabeth I assumes the throne of England, marking the beginning of the Elizabethan Age, a period of forty-five years during which significant advancements in English poetry and drama occurred.
- 1564 William Shakespeare, generally acknowledged by modern readers as the greatest dramatist in the history of the English language, is born.
- 1605 The first volume of *Don Quixote* by Miguel de Cervantes is published. Written in Spanish, *Don Quixote* is widely considered to be the first modern novel.
- 1649 The Puritan-led British Commonwealth Parliament, in control after the overthrow of the British monarchy, bans theatrical productions throughout England due to the purported indecency of dramatic works. The ban would last until 1680, and would be followed by an explosion of theatrical development during the period known as the Restoration.
- 1719 *The Life and Strange Surprising Adventures of Robinson Crusoe* by Daniel Defoe is published; this book is often regarded as the first true novel of the English language.
- 1798 *Lyrical Ballads, with a Few Other Poems*, a poetic collection by William Wordsworth and Samuel Taylor Coleridge, is published, marking for many the beginning of the Romantic movement in English literature.
- 1800–Today**
- 1856 Gustave Flaubert’s novel *Madame Bovary* is published in serial form, leading to an obscenity trial over its contents. *Madame Bovary* is considered by many to be the key work that launched the Realism movement in literature.
- 1857 Novelist Charles Dickens founds *All the Year Round*, one of many inexpensive British serial magazines that make literature available to virtually all levels of social class; *All the Year Round* subsequently features the first publication of the Dickens novels *Great Expectations* and *A Tale of Two Cities*.
- 1873 Production begins on the first commercially successful typewriter by E. Remington and Sons, which will allow writers to produce work substantially more quickly and more neatly than writing by hand.
- 1922 James Joyce’s novel *Ulysses* and T. S. Eliot’s poem “The Waste Land” are both published, defining for many the Modernist literary movement.
- 1924 André Breton publishes his *Surrealist Manifesto*, launching an avant-garde literary and artistic movement characterized by a celebration of the irrational.
- 1932 Joseph Stalin, dictatorial leader of the Soviet Union, decrees that socialist realism—an artistic style in which the working class and government leaders are praised—is the only government-approved art style. Writers and artists who create controversial works are censored and placed into labor camps; a secret distribution system known as *samizdat* is created to preserve and share censored works among dissenting intellectuals.
- 1950 Eugène Ionesco’s play *The Bald Soprano* debuts in Paris, launching the theatrical movement known as Theater of the Absurd.
- 1992 The World Wide Web, an interlinking structure designed by Sir Tim Berners-Lee for viewing cross-referenced multimedia documents from any location through data transfer, is officially released.