

# The Changing World

*Perhaps no century in human history has experienced the degree of change that took place in the 1900s. At its best, the 20th century saw the spread of democracy, great scientific achievements, and marvels of technology. At its worst, it was the most violent, most destructive century in human history. Writers had no shortage of subjects.*

## Struggles for Power

The century was defined by its conflicts. In two world wars, great powers collided in struggles for economic and political domination. In the Cold War,



Indian leader Mahatma Gandhi, a key figure in India's successful revolt against British rule

competing systems—democratic capitalism and communism—fought for supremacy.

During the second half of the century, independence movements against European rule sprang up throughout Africa and Asia, resulting in bloody conflicts. More recently, power struggles became more localized, with terrorism and civil war taking high civilian casualties.

## Triumphs—and Tragedies—of Science and Technology

In the 20th century, advances in science and technology changed life dramatically. The automobile, high-speed trains, and jet planes enabled us to travel faster and farther than ever before. A revolution in communication allowed us to send and receive information across the world in the blink of an eye. Radio, television, film, computers, cell phones, and the Internet—all were invented or flourished in the 20th century. With the flick of a switch, we can cool a house, light up a skyscraper, or heat an entire city. The same know-how has made it possible to send fresh foods across continents and oceans.

Perhaps the most beneficial achievements of the century occurred in medicine. Antibiotics, vaccines, surgery, and an arsenal of medicines can now fight disease and extend life. A more nutritious diet, thanks primarily to improved methods of farming and distribution, is now available to many. Life expectancy has climbed steadily, especially in developed countries.

Yet science and technology have also been put to destructive uses. In World War I, for example, advanced biological and chemical weapons killed thousands. The technology of war became even more powerful in the 1940s with the invention of the atom bomb, the most powerful means of destruction ever created. More recently, our great appetite for energy has depleted precious natural resources, while the pollution of air, soil, and water has posed a worldwide threat to health and safety. To a degree, we are victims of our own successes.



An American astronaut stands on the surface of the moon.



Soldier wearing gas mask (1918)

## New Ways of Living

Over the century, everyday life changed at an ever-quicken pace. Industrialization, which had begun in Europe in the 18th century, gradually spread around the world. As a result, consumer goods became widely available, personal wealth increased, and cities grew rapidly. At the start of the 20th century, the vast majority of the world's population lived in rural areas. By century's end, more than 40 percent of that population lived in urban areas. In the cities, new economic opportunities opened, cultures mingled, and new ideas challenged traditional ways of life.

Throughout the world, many people have benefited from economic growth and progress in science, medicine, and agriculture. However, the gap between rich and poor nations is widening, and many still live in grinding poverty.

## Global Interdependence

Advances in trade, technology, and communications have made the world a "smaller" place. In the first decades of the 20th century, Western countries seemed to control the fate of the world because of their power and colonial rule of nations in Asia and Africa. In recent decades, nations have become more interdependent. Former colonies welcome trade with and investment from the West, while businesses in developed countries, such as Japan, Germany, and the United States, depend on international markets.

As national economies blend into one global economy, some positive and negative effects have emerged. On the one hand, cultural exchanges can enrich individual nations. On the other hand, some countries fear losing their native cultures because of the influence of popular Western culture, with its rock music, jeans, and television shows.



Family and friends watching their new cable television in the isolated Asian country of Bhutan.

## Democracy and Education

In the last century, democracy and education became more widespread across the world.

In 1902, for example, only Australia and New Zealand allowed all adult citizens to vote. Over the next hundred years, citizen participation in government increased dramatically, especially for women and minorities. Democratic governments can now be found on every continent. Women now vote in nearly every country where men have the right to vote, and women, such as Margaret Thatcher (Great Britain) and Golda Meir (Israel), have served as elected heads of state.

The 20th century also witnessed dramatic changes in education. At the beginning of the century, widespread formal education was common only in the West and often limited to elementary levels. By the end of the century, nearly every country of the world provided free elementary education to its young people. The number of students receiving secondary and higher education has also increased significantly worldwide. In Africa, for example, more than 40 percent of the secondary-school-age population is enrolled in secondary school.



## UNIT SEVEN

# Literary Map of the World

As you will see, writers in the 20th century often drew inspiration from other cultures and reached an international audience. Japanese writers studied Russian novelists. African writers drew inspiration from African-American writers in the United States. This map shows you where writers featured in this unit were born or, in some cases, the countries in which they made their fame.



**Mexico**

**Octavio Paz**

### Other Writers from South America

**Chile**  
Gabriela Mistral  
Pablo Neruda  
**Colombia**  
Gabriel García Márquez



**Chile**

**Isabel Allende**

### Other Writers from Europe

**Czech Republic**  
Rainer Maria Rilke  
**England**  
Virginia Woolf  
**Germany**  
Bertolt Brecht, Nelly Sachs  
**Italy**  
Luigi Pirandello  
**Ireland**  
James Joyce  
**Poland**  
Wisława Szymborska  
**Russia**  
Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn  
**Romania**  
Elie Wiesel  
**Spain**  
Federico García Lorca



**Czech Republic**

**Franz Kafka**



**Russia**

**Anna Akhmatova**

### Writers from Middle East

**Israel**  
Yehuda Amichai  
**Palestine**  
Mahmud Darwish



**Nigeria**

**Chinua Achebe**



**Japan**

**Yasunari Kawabata**



**Australia**

**Judith Wright**

### Other Writers from Africa

**Algeria**  
Albert Camus  
**Egypt**  
Naguib Mahfouz  
**Nigeria**  
Wole Soyinka  
**Senegal**  
Léopold Sédar Senghor  
**South Africa**  
Nadine Gordimer



# Expressions of Modernism

**Why It Matters** As a general term, *modernism* describes much of the art, literature, and thought of the first half of the 20th century. To be a modernist is to be someone in love with what is new and provocative. As a group, modernists typically fought against traditions of all kinds and set out to create innovative works, whether in art, literature, philosophy, or other forms of expression. The next few pages will help you to understand the cultural movement that gave birth to modern literature.

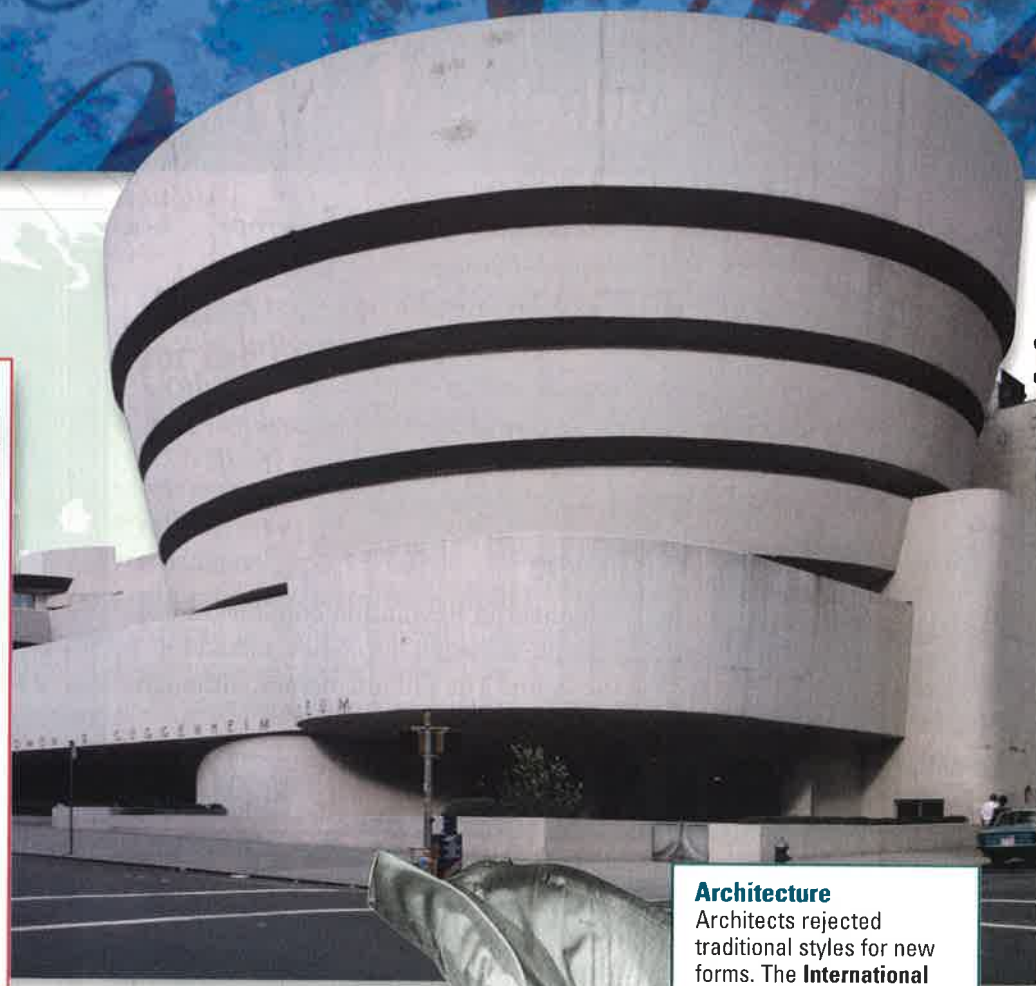
For Links to Modernism, click on:



## Movies and Photography

From the silent films of the early decades to the extravagant productions of the 1930s and 1940s, movies defined the 20th century. Early filmmakers such as the American D. W. Griffith and the Russian Sergei Eisenstein helped turn popular entertainment into works of art. Charlie Chaplin's silent films made him an international star. A scene from his 1936 *Modern Times* is shown here.

Photography also evolved into an art form, thanks to the efforts of such masters as the Americans Alfred Stieglitz, Edward Steichen, and Man Ray. Like painters before them, photographers held exhibitions of their work and sold photographs to bidders.



## Architecture

Architects rejected traditional styles for new forms. The **International style**, popularized by the German Walter Gropius and his **Bauhaus** design school, was characterized by clean lines, open interiors, and the use of materials such as glass, steel, and concrete. The American Frank Lloyd Wright experimented with new materials and designs. Above is his Guggenheim Museum in New York City.



## Art and Design

Many artists rebelled against earlier realistic styles. The founders of **cubism**, Pablo Picasso of Spain and Georges Braque of France, transformed natural shapes into fragmented geometric forms. **Expressionist** painters like the Russian Wassily Kandinsky used bold colors and distorted shapes to express emotion. Sculptors experimented with new ways of portraying the human body, as shown at right by a 1947 work of the British sculptor Henry Moore.

Even ordinary objects, such as chairs and dinnerware, became the province of art. The chair shown above was designed in 1928 by the Swiss-born French architect and designer Le Corbusier.

Family Group



## Music and Dance

Composers also rebelled against traditional styles. The Austrian composer Arnold Schönberg rejected traditional harmonies and musical scales. The Russian composer Igor Stravinsky relied on irregular rhythms and new sound combinations.

**Modern dance** reacted against the highly structured ballet of the late 19th century. The American Isadora Duncan danced barefoot in a loose tunic to express her personality. Martha Graham, shown at right, developed dance techniques to express complex emotions.





# Cultural Highlights of Modernism

*As a cultural movement, modernism began in Europe, though its influence soon spread internationally. For artists, writers, and thinkers, the world of the first half of the 20th century was both an exciting and dreadful place. Wars of furious destruction, dizzying changes in everyday life, new ideas everywhere—to modernists and ordinary people alike, the world seemed to be reinventing itself.*

## Social Change in Europe

The changes begun during the Industrial Revolution continued into the 20th century. Millions of people crowded into cities, talked on telephones, and read by electric lights. The old aristocracy, although still rich, steadily lost power, while the middle classes gained both wealth and power. Then came a war and a revolution that completely knocked Europe off its 19th-century foundations. The massive slaughter of young men in World War I—nearly half a generation—horried people, shaking their faith in their leaders and even in civilization itself. The Russian Revolution ushered in a new social, political, and economic order, called communism, that threatened the capitalist society built by industrialization.

In the 1920s, cars and radios helped speed up social change, as people—especially women—gained more freedom. But by the 1930s, unresolved political and economic problems boosted the rise of dictators. Mussolini (Italy), Hitler (Germany), and Stalin (Russia) unleashed the chaos and violence that led to another world war.



In Europe and the United States, women took to the streets, protesting laws that prohibited women from voting.



Sigmund Freud

## Breakdown of Traditional Beliefs

World War I shook many people's belief in the traditional virtues of reason, order, and obedience. But new ideas had begun hammering at traditional beliefs even earlier. Charles Darwin had dealt a major blow to traditional views of human nature with his theory of evolution, published in *On the Origin of Species* in 1859. In 1900, Sigmund Freud published his theory that unconscious, irrational desires rule human lives as much as reason. Soon after, the physicist Albert Einstein upset the idea of an orderly, predictable universe with his theory of relativity. To some, the breakdown of tradition created what T. S. Eliot called "the waste land." To others, it meant freedom.

Pablo Picasso in his Paris studio

## Alienation of the Artist

Modernists sought a total break from the past and experimented constantly with new forms and ideas. But with liberation also came alienation. Modernists felt distant from society, often expressing hostility toward the very people who bought their art and read their works. In response, many heaped scorn upon the modernists, mocking what they could not understand. To advance the cause of art, artists and writers often banded together in various movements. A number of these groups published manifestos, or public statements of their views.

## Search for the New

If there was one rallying cry that united the various modernists, it would have to be "Make it new!" This provocative phrase, uttered by the poet Ezra Pound, was understood by all. Sometimes "new" meant shocking, like the dislocated features in a Picasso portrait; sometimes it meant complicated, like the experimental fiction of Virginia Woolf, James Joyce, and Marcel Proust. In music, the new might be Stravinsky's dissonance, or clash of sounds, rather than a harmonious blend. In short, "new" meant anything that disrupted a reader's or audience's expectations. This constant search for the new resulted in the fragmentation of the art and literary worlds, producing many different movements and styles.



*Man Leaning on a Table* (1916), Pablo Picasso



## Modernism as an International Movement

Like Romanticism in the 19th century, modernism was an international movement. Modernist artists and writers traveled widely and were subject to influences from many different countries, as shown

Artist	Born in	Also resided in	Influenced by
Le Corbusier <i>architect</i>	Switzerland	Paris	Italian Renaissance architecture
Pablo Picasso <i>painter, sculptor</i>	Spain	Paris, the south of France	African masks
René Magritte <i>painter</i>	Belgium	Paris	French 19th-century symbolist poetry
Rainer Maria Rilke <i>poet</i>	Czech Republic	Paris, Munich, Berlin, Russia, Spain, Austria	Russian landscape
James Joyce <i>writer</i>	Ireland	Trieste, Paris, Zurich	French novelists
Léopold Sédar Senghor <i>poet</i>	Senegal	Paris	African tribal culture



## Modernism

The British writer Virginia Woolf (1882–1941) once declared that “in or about December, 1910, human character changed.” Woolf picked that date to mark the enormous changes that occurred in her lifetime. Her bold statement sets the context for **modernism**, a literary and artistic movement that developed in the early decades of the 20th century. Woolf and other modernist writers shared a belief that their world was radically different from that of previous eras. The modernists felt disconnected from the social, religious, and artistic traditions of the past. To reflect their new and unsettling world, modernist writers experimented with daringly original literary styles and forms.

### The Modernist Movement

In literature, modernism was a diverse movement that spanned Europe, the Americas, and even parts of Africa and Asia. While no two modernist writers employed the same style, the works of modernist writers do share some defining features.

**The Mind as Subject** Modernist writers often set out to explore the depths of the human mind. In fact, unlike the realistic novels of the 19th century, which involved many characters and settings, modernist novels often focused on the thought processes of a few main characters. Writers such as James Joyce and Virginia Woolf employed a new technique called **stream of consciousness**, in which the rapid and jumbled flow of a character’s thoughts and feelings is presented as it occurs.

**Innovative Styles and Forms** Modernist writers typically broke new ground in style and form, following the advice of the American poet Ezra Pound to “make it new.” For example, in T. S. Eliot’s long

poem *The Waste Land* (1922), the poet blended various styles and even languages, creating a collage of fragments. Eliot and other modern poets abandoned traditional stanza forms and meter for the more natural flow of **free verse**. In his novel *Ulysses* (1922), James Joyce tells an ingenious story modeled on Homer’s *Odyssey*. Joyce’s ordinary hero, Leopold Bloom, wanders the streets of Dublin on a June day in 1904. With breathtaking inventiveness, Joyce portrays the random thoughts of Bloom and others while making use of an array of styles of writing.

### Writers and Artists: Modernist Allies

This painting by the French artist Marcel Duchamp caused a scandal when it was shown at the International Exhibition of Modern Art held in New York City in 1913. By throwing away the old conventions of realism, modern artists such as Duchamp

and Pablo Picasso inspired writers to search for new forms of expression. In fact, Virginia Woolf’s statement about the change in human character “in or about December, 1910” may have been inspired by a controversial exhibition of modern art that she viewed in London in that month and year.



*Nude Descending a Staircase (No. 2)*  
(1912), Marcel Duchamp.  
Oil on canvas, 57 1/2" x 35 1/4".

**Anxiety and Alienation** In many modernist works, the world is portrayed as a wasteland marked by violence and anxiety. The characters in these works are often alienated, or emotionally withdrawn, from society and sometimes even from themselves. In Joseph Conrad’s short novel *Heart of Darkness* (1902), a main character, Kurtz, becomes corrupted, and he abandons civilization for a life of isolation. In the opening line of Franz Kafka’s “Metamorphosis” (page 1108), we are introduced to a character so alienated from his world that he is transformed into a bug.

As Gregor Samsa awoke one morning from uneasy dreams he found himself transformed in his bed into a gigantic insect.

### Modernists in Their Own Words

**Joseph Conrad:** “My task which I am trying to achieve is, by the power of the written word, to make you hear, to make you feel—it is, before all, to make you *see*.”

**Virginia Woolf:** “Let us record the atoms as they fall upon the mind in the order in which they fall, let us trace the pattern, however disconnected and incoherent in appearance.”

**Rainer Maria Rilke:** “Works of art always spring from those who have faced the danger, gone to the very end of an experience, to the point beyond which no human being can go.”

**Marcel Proust:** “If a little dreaming is dangerous, the cure for it is not to dream less but to dream more, to dream all the time.”

### Strategies for Reading: Modernist Literature

1. Visualize as you read. Modernist writers often present details and images that will help you “see” the characters and setting.
2. Notice what is “modern” about both the subject and the style. Think about what makes the work original or distinctive.
3. Be alert to anything in the work that seems contradictory to or inconsistent with your expectations. In “Metamorphosis,” you will meet a man who turns into an insect yet is worried about being late for work. Often, the **theme** or the **tone** (the writer’s attitude toward his or her subject) is revealed through such surprising turns.
4. Be patient with complexity. Give yourself time to understand what you are reading. Because modernist literature relies so heavily on suggestion, you shouldn’t expect everything to make sense all at once.
5. Ask yourself about the writer’s view of the modern world. Is it a bleak view or an optimistic one? Why?
6. **Monitor** your reading strategies and modify them when your understanding breaks down. Remember to use the strategies for active reading: **predict, visualize, connect, question, clarify, and evaluate.**





# METAMORPHOSIS

FRANZ KAFKA



**Franz Kafka**  
1883–1924

**A Tortured Soul** “I have the true feeling of myself only when I am unbearably unhappy.” Franz Kafka wrote these words in a 1913 diary entry. A lonely and brooding man, Kafka suffered in body and spirit throughout his adult life. His physical ailments included insomnia, severe headaches, and tuberculosis, which eventually killed him at age 41. Although he loved

writing, it exhausted him and caused him great frustration and self-doubt.

**A Double Life** Despite Kafka’s inner torment, outwardly he led a successful and respectable life. He was born into a German-speaking, middle-class Jewish family in Prague, a city in what is now the Czech Republic, and trained as a lawyer. From 1907 to 1922, he worked steadily in the insurance business. His friends and fellow workers knew him as charming, intelligent, kind, industrious, and even humorous. Although he was engaged three times—twice to the same woman—he could never commit to marriage. He devoted himself fiercely to the literary life, however, pursuing it after work hours. Still, only a handful of his stories were published in his lifetime.

**Fear of the Father** Scholars have traced many of Kafka’s problems to his tyrannical father. Hermann Kafka used to bully his timid, sensitive son to be more like himself—strong, powerful, self-assured, and self-satisfied. Fear of his father haunted Kafka all his life, and he believed that it even caused his avoidance of marriage and his inability to find happiness. Yet Kafka made creative use of his fear. In many of his stories, innocent people are menaced by cruel and unreasonable authorities.

**A German Jew in Prague** Kafka’s lifelong feeling of being an outcast can be partially explained by his position in society. Although he grew up in the Czech city of Prague, Kafka considered himself German, and he always wrote in German. Because he was Jewish, however, the German community in Prague would have nothing to do with him. Two years before his death, Kafka became involved with a small Jewish community in Berlin. Had he lived, he would probably have been killed by the Nazis. His three sisters all died in concentration camps.

**Other Works**  
*In the Penal Colony*  
*The Castle*  
*The Trial*

## Connect to Your Life

“As Gregor Samsa awoke one morning from uneasy dreams he found himself transformed in his bed into a gigantic insect.” So begins Kafka’s story. Imagine yourself in Gregor’s situation. Write a brief description of how you would react and how your family might respond. As you read, compare the reactions of Gregor and his family to the responses that you imagined.

## Focus Your Reading

### LITERARY ANALYSIS: POINT OF VIEW

Point of view is the narrative method used in a story. In a story told from the **first-person point of view**, a character in the story narrates what happens in his or her own words. Such a narrator uses a first-person pronoun, such as *I* or *me*, to refer to himself or herself. In a story told from the **third-person point of view**, a narrator outside the action of the story describes events and characters. Such a narrator uses third-person pronouns, such as *he*, *she*, and *they*, to refer to the characters. Furthermore, the narrator never refers to himself or herself. In “Metamorphosis,” Kafka primarily uses what’s known as a **third-person limited point of view**. The narrator is “limited” to the thoughts and feelings of only one character, the bug Gregor Samsa. Though Gregor does not tell the story himself, we see the events through his eyes.

### ACTIVE READING: VISUALIZING DETAILS

**Visualizing** is the act of forming mental pictures based upon what you are reading. By paying close attention to the details given by the narrator, you will be able to visualize Gregor’s experiences.

**READER’S NOTEBOOK** As you read about the changes in Gregor’s life, pause from time to time to “see” the scene being described. Form your own mental pictures from the many realistic details of Gregor’s world. Make a list of the images that you can most easily visualize.

## Build Background

### A Famous Story of Transformation

Kafka’s story draws upon the traditions of mythology and folklore, which are filled with stories of metamorphosis. A **metamorphosis** is a transformation from one state to another: a Greek god becomes a swan; a man becomes a donkey. In this story, which is Kafka’s most famous one, the author blends the fantastic elements of mythology with the convincing details of realism. A mild-mannered salesperson named Gregor Samsa wakes up one morning mysteriously transformed into a giant bug. As you will see, this is only the beginning of his troubles. Although Gregor’s transformation may be magical, his experience is made painfully real to the reader.

**A Challenge to Readers** Ever since the story was first published, readers have been challenged and puzzled by it. Many different interpretations have been offered to explain the story’s message. As you read, try to build your own interpretation of what Kafka may have been trying to say.

### WORDS TO KNOW Vocabulary Preview

amissly	imminent	omission
disgrace	intervene	refuge
disavow	lavishly	unintelligible
equilibrium		