

# 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> Century English Literature

**Easy Words**

# Social Background

- The 17th century marked a shift from an age of faith to an age of reason. Literature represents the turbulence in society, religion, and the monarchy of this period.
- Life for the English people changed as religious controversy and civil war shook the nation.
- These issues reformulated the role of individuals in society, perspectives of faith, and social structures in England

- Writers of this period offer their own philosophies as proof of the issues and influenced the masses.
- Specific examples of authors of this period who present English issues and perspectives in their works are John Donne and John Milton
- Common themes among these two authors are love, religion, and political views.

# Major Events in 17th Century England

- The difficulty of combining church and state created hostility with the people.
- People were imprisoned for practicing faiths beyond that sanctioned by the government.
- Still the Protestant church of England was perceived by the people of England as becoming increasingly similar to the Catholic church. Creation of religious sects, such as Puritans, Separationists, and Presbyterians created rifts among the people and intolerance by the government.
- In addition to the problems of tied religion and state was the shift in monarchy and combined religious tensions.

# Terms

1. Reformation
2. Church a) Catholic & b) Protestant
3. Puritans
4. Cavaliers
5. Parliamentarians