

Late Modern English is the form of the language used from the **eighteenth century** to the **present day**. During this period, new forms of English emerged beyond the British Isles: in America, in Asia and in Africa.

How do we know about Late Modern English?

There is a huge amount of printed information from this period. From the late eighteenth century, scholars made detailed records of the language, in historical dictionaries, in grammars and in books on pronunciation. Towards the end of the nineteenth century the first mechanical and electronic recordings of speech were made.

What do people write in Late Modern English?

During this period, most people in Britain and North America came to know how to read and write, and English was used for everything from private letters to poetry. New types of literature, such as the novel, emerged, and recently English has become the dominant language of the Internet. In Africa and India, English has an official role even though countries there have gained independence from Britain and local languages are no longer thought second-best.



What does Late Modern English look like?

Many kinds of Late Modern English exist. Here is part of a poem by Linton Kwesi Johnson, written in a variety of English known as Jamaican Creole:

**youdauta,
you are di queen of di day an di nite is your mite.
site? overstan. youdauta.
check out di tide before yu jump in di watah;
den swim, yea sing, sing youdauta.**

Translation

youdauta = young women, **mite** = might, realm of power, **site?** = do you see it?, **ovastan** = *overstand*, an emphatic form of 'understand'

Young women, you are the queen of the day and the night is your realm of power. Do you see it? Understand, young women. Be aware of the tide before you jump into the water; then swim, yes sing, sing, young women.