## Characteristics of Victorian Literature

The literature of the Victorian age (1837 – 1901, named for the reign of Queen Victoria) entered in a new period after the romantic revival. The literature of this era expressed the fusion of pure romance to gross realism. Though, the Victorian Age produced great poets, the age is also remarkable for the excellence of its prose.

The discoveries of science have particular effects upon the literature of the age. If you study all the great writers of this period, you will mark four general characteristics:

1. Literature of this age tends to come closer to daily life which reflects its practical problems and interests. It becomes a powerful instrument for human progress. Socially & economically, Industrialism was on the rise and various reform movements like emancipation, child labor, women's rights, and evolution.

2. Moral Purpose: The Victorian literature seems to deviate from "art for art's sake" and asserts its moral purpose. Tennyson, Browning, Carlyle, Ruskin - all were the teachers of England with the faith in their moral message to instruct the world.

3. Idealism: It is often considered as an age of doubt and pessimism. The influence of science is felt here. The whole age seems to be caught in the conception of man in relation to the universe with the idea of evolution.

4. Though, the age is characterized as practical and materialistic, most of the writers exalt a purely ideal life. It is an idealistic age where the great ideals like truth, justice, love, brotherhood are emphasized by poets, essayists and novelists of the age.

## The Style of the Victorian Novel

Victorian novels tend to be idealized portraits of difficult lives in which hard work, perseverance, love and luck win out in the end; virtue would be rewarded and wrongdoers are suitably punished. They tended to be of an improving nature with a central moral lesson at heart. While this formula was the basis for much of earlier Victorian fiction, the situation became more complex as the century progressed.

**Victorian literature** is the literature produced during the reign of Queen Victoria (1837-1901) and corresponds to the Victorian era. It forms a link and transition between the writers of the romantic period and the very different literature of the 20th century.

The 19th century saw the novel become the leading form of literature in English. The works by pre-Victorian writers such as Jane Austen and Walter Scott had perfected both closely-observed social satire and adventure stories. Popular works opened a market for the novel amongst a reading public. The 19th century is often regarded as a high point in British literature as well as in other countries such as France, the United States and Russia. Books, and novels in particular, became ubiquitous, and the "Victorian novelist" created legacy works with continuing appeal.

Significant Victorian novelists and poets include: Matthew Arnold, the Brontë sisters (Emily, Anne and Charlotte Brontë), Christina Rossetti, Robert Browning, Elizabeth Barrett Browning, Joseph Conrad, Edward Bulwer-Lytton, Wilkie Collins, Charles Dickens, Benjamin Disraeli, George Eliot, George Meredith, Elizabeth Gaskell, George Gissing, Richard Jefferies, Thomas Hardy, A. E. Housman, Rudyard Kipling, Robert Louis

Stevenson, Bram Stoker, Algernon Charles Swinburne, Philip Meadows Taylor, Alfred Lord Tennyson, William Thackeray, Oscar Wilde, Lewis Carroll and H. G. Wells (although many people consider his writing to be more of the Edwardian age).

## How does this information apply to *The Time Machine*?