

RA-Path to Enlightenment

Quiz Essay Question Help

How to earn full credit for your response

How Are These Fashions Characteristic of the 1980's?



The Question:

Explain how John Steinbeck's *Of Mice and Men* can be considered a characteristic work of the Modernist literary period. Write a one to two paragraph response and be sure to include at least two specific references to the text to support your answer.

What is a Literary Period?

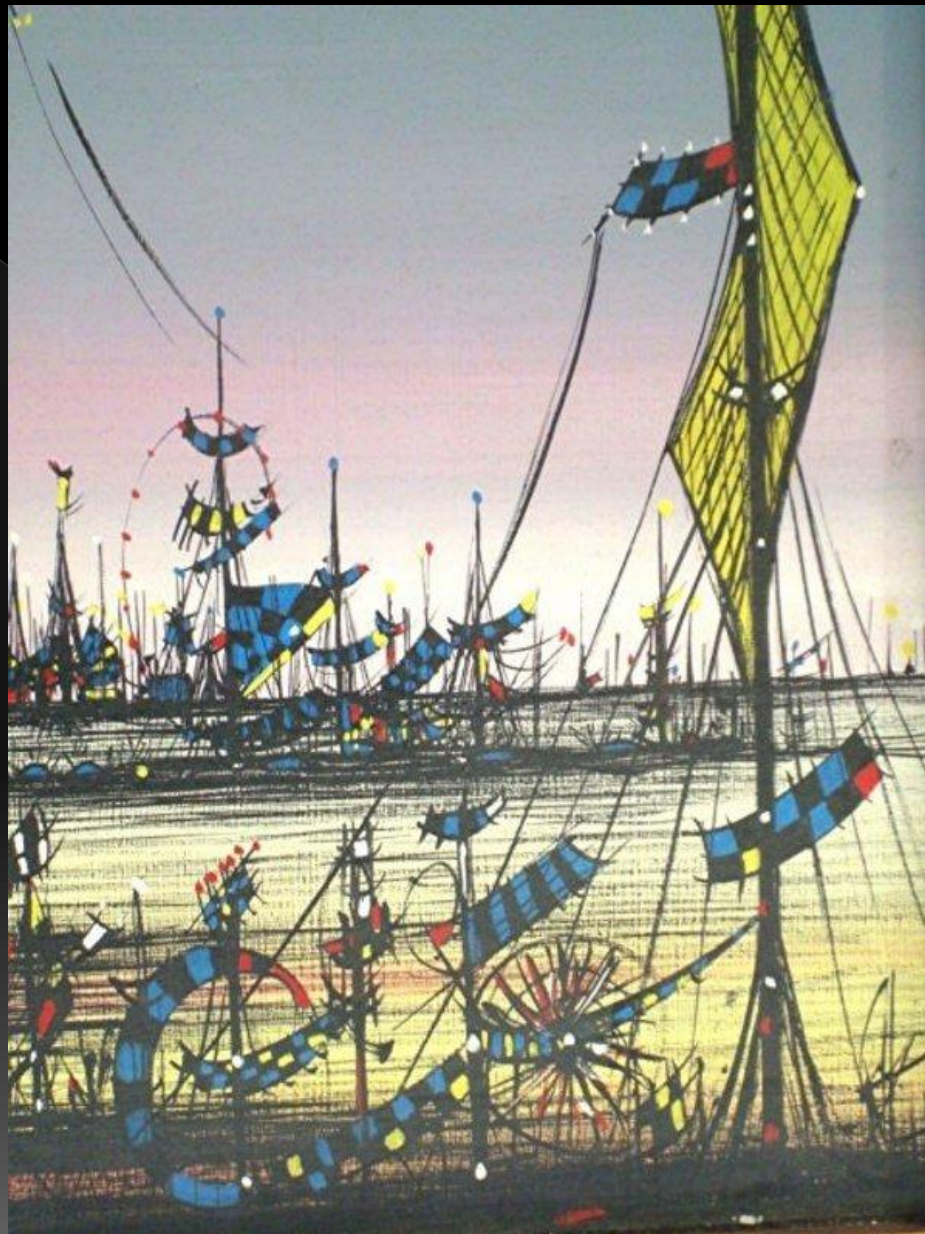
Literary periods are spans of time in which we can identify common themes, styles, and formats in literature.



These aspects of the writing are similar because they share common influences from religion, world events, and trends in ways of thinking about the world.

What is the Modernist Period?

- ◎ First, something written during the Modernist period it is NOT the same as something written in modern times.
- ◎ The Modernist period spanned from around 1915-1945 (not exactly “modern”).
- ◎ Like all literary periods, something written during the Modernist period will show evidence of certain influences and will share common characteristics with other works from the period.



Characteristics to Look For

Signs of Modernism:

◎ Style

- > Story is written using more than one narrator to give multiple points of view
- > Story is not told in chronological order; it jumps around
 - ***in media res***-- a term to describe the readers' entrance into the middle of a story
- > Writing is much less formal than in previous literary periods
 - ***stream-of-consciousness***- a term to describe a style of writing that presents the thoughts and feelings of a character as they occur so that readers feel like they are in the character's head.



◎ *Content*

- > Stories with themes that focus on “the universal human condition” or, basically the bad things in life that we all experience like loneliness, uncertainty, fear, etc.
- > Stories that focus on the present instead of the past or future
- > Authors focus on presenting what they view as the truth or realities of life to readers instead of exploring unlikely situations.
- > Many allusions to classical Greek and Roman literature
- > Stories are often short
- > Instead of using complicated plots, authors use many rhetorical strategies such as allusion, symbolism, and repetition to communicate the theme. The plot (what actually happens in the story) may be quite simple.



Your Response

- ◎ When you are asked to explain why a work is characteristic of a literary period:
 - > First, demonstrate your understanding of the period in a sentence. Ex. Modernist writers often..., Modernism is characterized by..., Modernist literature usually contains...
 - > Second, explain how the text does what you just said
 - > Third, give examples from the text. It is very important that you give this evidence! The evidence can be direct quotes, paraphrases of situations, descriptions of characters, features of the text, etc. DO NOT summarize the plot. This only proves that you read and understood what happened in the story; answering the question correctly requires much more than that.

