# *Historical Background.*

# People begin to think of themselves differently.

# Freud

# Modern philosophy

# Einstein

# Darwin

# The world is changing very quickly.

# Communication

# Electricity

# Transportation

# Industrialization

# There is a lot of conflict.

# Class struggle

# Socialism

# Capitalism

# Imperialism

# World War I

# Hopelessness and pessimism about the future.

# What does “Modernism” mean?

# The word “modern” comes from the Greek *modernus*. It means “a new way, different from the past.”

# It is the opposite of traditional.

# When does Modernism begin?

# Virginia Woolf, famous writer and critic, said that modernism began around December, 1910.

# The beginning of Modernism is probably much earlier.

# In the 13th Century society changed in several important ways.

# The rise of the middle class led to the weakening of the power of kings.

# The Reformation (Protestantism) led to the weakening of the power of religious authority.

# The rise of the city led to a new economy where people could rise economically.

# The invention of the printing press.

# All of these things led to the creation of Individualism. Every person could make choices for themselves and try to understand the world in their own way.

# Another important period was the Enlightenment in the 18th Century

# The Age of Reason. Modern scientific study. Gave the individual intellectual authority.

# The Romantic Revolution. Gave the individual emotional authority.

# Democracy. Gave the individual political authority.

# Central Ideas

# Language. Writers begin to write differently. The focus of the writing is not about the story. It is about how language creates meaning. Ex. Human.

# Writers don’t tell the reader a truth. The modernist writings present an opportunity for the reader to discover truth on their own. (Opposite of realism, which tried to show the world to the reader and often contained a happy ending.)

# Literature becomes a kind of puzzle with no answer. The reader must read the story and decide for themselves what the meaning is.

# Symbolic language. In poetry especially, words and images are used symbolically to create many possible interpretations.

# The end of “meta-narratives” (stories that were thought to explain everything). Ex. Biblical literalism.

# Characters in the stories often see the events in very different ways. Ex. *Winesburg, Ohio* by Sherwood Anderson.

# Apocalypse. “taking off the covering.”

# Isolation and the meaninglessness of life.

# The end of the literary “Hero.” Most characters are flawed and they think about their problems a lot. Walt Whitman vs. Ernest Hemingway. Self-confident vs. self-conscious.

# Modernism and Art

# Visual Arts.

# Manet

# Picasso

# Music

# Stravinski’s “Rite of Spring.” The composer uses techniques to make the music sound very strange.

# Theater

# Becket and the destruction of the stage.

# Film

# Architecture

# Fashion

# Movements

# The Age of Innocence (1880-1914) A transitional period.

# Henry James

# Upton Sinclair

# The Lost Generation (1914-1939) The main period of modernism.

# Sherwood Anderson

# Ernest Hemingway

# William Faulkner

# Sinclair Lewis

# F. Scott Fitzgerald

# Ezra Pound

# T.S. Eliot

# The Post-War Years (1939-1955) The beginnings of post-modernism.

# Counter-culture (1955-1970) A period where ‘outsider’ art becomes established.