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In this Companion, leading scholars and critics address the work of the most celebrated and enduring novelists from the British Isles (excluding living writers): among them Defoe, Richardson, Sterne, Austen, Dickens, the Brontës, George Eliot, Hardy, James, Lawrence, Joyce, and Woolf. The significance of each writer in their own time is explained, the relation of their work to that of predecessors and successors explored, and their most important novels analysed. These essays do not aim to create a canon in a prescriptive way, but taken together they describe a strong developing tradition of the writing of fictional prose over the past 300 years. This volume is a helpful guide for those studying and teaching the novel, and will allow readers to consider the significance of less familiar authors such as Henry Green and Elizabeth Bowen alongside those with a more established place in literary history.

The ideal introduction to the English novel for students and teachers, this book assesses the importance of the finest novelists in the English language (excluding living writers). Each writer is introduced in his or her literary context, and the major works are analysed.