The Regency Era

The Regency timeframe was a unique and interesting time in history. And if you're interested in writing a romance book that's based in this time, then you'll need to become an expert on anything and everything Regency.

This information package is designed to help you know where to start in your journey to become that expert. I'll give you details and points to think about as you start to create your world and your characters. At the end of each section, you'll find a list of credible sources that you can dig deep to find out more.

Regency history

Take a moment to understand the history of what Regency is.

This era officially started when King George IV had to stand in as proxy due to his father's illness. When King George III was deemed unfit to rule, George IV took over. He became the prince regent. This era formally began in 1811 and ended in 1820 when George III died. This era is from approximately 1795 to 1837 when both George IV and William IV died. (1)

It seemed that this King George IV had lavish tastes and lifestyle as he was one of the greatest patrons of the arts and architecture. (1) Because he was discouraged from making important decisions, he spent his time indulging in his excesses. This is where he spent more money than he had in building projects and having lavish parties. (2)

So, this era is epitomised by the Regent himself. (3) It was with this indulging and lavish-ness that the Regency became known. So, when we read or watch anything from this time, we can expect lavish parties and extravagant food with men and women in fancy finery. All you need to do is go and find a Jane Austin like movie and you'll see what I mean.

Links to read even more:

(1) https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Regency_era
(2) www.janeausten.org/regency-period.asp
(3) https://www.regencyhistory.net/2012/09/when-is-regency-era.html
(4) https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ton_(le_bon_ton)

Difference between Regency and Victorian Eras, and even the Georgian Era!

There is a little bit of difference when it comes to a romance that's based in the Regency Era and the Victorian Era. The most significant is the years of each time.

The Regency was from approx. 1795-1837 with King George IV being the Regent. The Victorian Era was from 1837 to 1901 with Queen Victoria on the throne. This era was when the industrial revolution transformed England. During this time, the working-class people flocked to the cities and worked in factories. This changed the way that people interacted with each other. (4) The Georgian Era was from

1714 to 1830 when all the George's (I, II, III, IV) were the rulers of England. (5) Yes, this time included the Regency Era.

When you sit down to write your Regency story, you need to make sure that your world fits into what the characters must've had to deal with. This includes the customs, the culture of the time, the different conventions that happened, as well as societal issues.

Links to read more:

(5) https://austenauthors.net/whats-the-difference-regency-vs-victorian/
(6) http://victorian-era.org/georgian-era-facts/comparison-of-georgian-era-and-victorian-era.html

Customs

Because the prince regent was the "first gentleman", he influenced not only the clothing but also the values and culture of the day. He owned fine paintings and commissioned great architecture. (6)

This branched into the way men and women were expected to behave in society. Anything from marriage customs to how long mourning practices were. Each of these are different things that you'll create depending on what your story will be about. Check out the links below:

Overall culture and lifestyle:

(7) https://www.lulus.com/blog/resources/regency-era-fashion-history-culture-and-lifestyle/
(8) https://historycollection.com/18-indecent-behaviors-of-the-regency-era/
(9) https://cobaltfairy.com/regency-era-etiquette-rules-lady/
(10) https://www.shondaland.com/inspire/a34730007/everything-you-wanted-to-know-about-regency-london-bridgerton/
(11) https://www.regencyhistory.net/2012/09/when-is-regency-era.html
(12) http://www.regrom.com/category/regency-history/regency-culture-and-society/
(13) https://historycollection.com/the-regency-era-splendid-facts-about-pop-cultures-favorite-period/

Mourning practices:

(14) https://sharonlathanauthor.com/mourning-and-burial-practices-during-the-regency/
(15) https://donnahatch.com/mourning-customs-in-regency-england/

The hunt for a suitable man to marry is very much the topic of Regency romances. Knowing who and what each character is and how they should behave is essential to making your story realistic and believable! Here're sites you can use to govern your character's behavoir:

Marriage and courtship:

(16) http://www.timothyjwelsh.com/courses/16sa218/2016/03/09/engagementmarriage-customs-in-the-regency-and-romantic-periods/

(17) https://historycollection.com/the-10-dos-and-donts-of-etiquette-to-become-a-lady-in-regency-england/
(18) https://cobaltfairy.com/regency-era-courtship-and-marriage/
(19) https://merrynallingham.com/regency-period/regency-courtship-and-marriage/
(20) https://janeaustensworld.wordpress.com/2019/02/14/love-courtship-and-marriage-in-the-regency-era/
(21) https://donnahatch.com/love-and-courtship-in-regency-england/

Families and family situations

If your book is going to have families, understanding that children were raised vastly different than what we, in the modern world, understand is how to be accurate and plausible. Here're some sites to make you think and plan accordingly:

(22) https://sharonlathanauthor.com/childcare-in-the-regency/
(23) https://janeaustensworld.wordpress.com/2007/06/18/two-worlds-children-during-the-regency-period/
(24) https://austenauthors.net/regency-servants-caring-for-wee-ones/
(25) https://donnahatch.com/education-and-other-forms-of-child-torture-in-regency-england/
(26) https://vanessariley.com/blog/2015/06/01/regency-wards-and-guardians-the-care-of-a-well-to-do-orphan/
(27) https://janitesonthejames.blogspot.com/2007/06/passing-time-playtime-for-children.html

Servants or household staff

The lady's maid or the butler played a huge role in any household, and not just the well-to-do ones. Even if a lady's maid might be a silent character in your book, you'll still need to create a believable one.

(28) https://www.kristenkoster.com/a-primer-on-regency-era-servants/
(29) https://donnahatch.com/servants-in-regency-england/
(30) https://cobaltfairy.com/upper-servants-regency-eras-household/
(31) https://austenauthors.net/regency-servants-introduction-steward/
(32) https://janeaustensworld.wordpress.com/tag/regency-servants/

Fashion

Fashion played a huge role in Regency England. And you could spend days just thinking about the way the people dressed and walked. Here's just a few links to get you started:

(33) http://www.victoriana.com/Regency-Era/
(34) https://www.kristenkoster.com/a-primer-on-regency-era-womens-fashion/
(35) https://janeausten.co.uk/blogs/mens-fashion/an-overview-of-mens-regency-fashion
(36) https://www.kristenkoster.com/a-primer-on-regency-era-mens-fashion/
(37) https://www.fashion-era.com/1800_accesories.htm

Titles of the English nobility and peerage

Understanding the complexity of the titles that the nobility and dignitaries, the peerage, had during the Regency period is something that, as an author, you're going to have to understand.

(38) https://www.regencyhistory.net/2018/08/dukes-marquesses-and-other-titles.html
(39) https://www.kristenkoster.com/a-primer-on-regency-peerage-and-precedence/

Naming your characters

Even the names of your characters are just as important as what they wear. From the meaning behind the name to the family link that name comes from, makes a difference whether your readers will catch you on a name that doesn't belong in this era.

I found several sites with names to pick through. Here's a condensed list:

Women:

- Abigail; Adelaide; Agnes; Albina; Alice; Alicia; Amelia; Amy; Angel; Anna/Ann/Anne; Arabella; Augusta; Awellah
- Barbara; Betsey; Betty; Bridget
- Caroline; Catherine (Katherine); Cecilia; Charity; Charlotte; Christianna; Clarissa
- Deborah; Diana; Dinah; Dorothea (Dorothy)
- Edith; Eleanor; Eliza; Elizabeth; Ellen; Emily; Emma; Emmeline; Esther; Euphiemia (Effie); Evelina
- Fanny; Florentia; Frances; Frederica
- Georgiana; Georgina; Grace
- Hannah; Harriet/Harriette; Helen (Helena); Henrietta; Horatia
- Isabella (Isabel)
- Jane; Jean; Jemima; Jenny; Jessie; Joanna (Joan); Josephine (Jo); Judith; Julia; Juliana; Juliet
- Katherine; Kitty
- Laura; Lavinia; Leah; Leticia (Letty); Lilias; Louisa; Louisa-Margaretta; Lucy; Lucy-Anne; Lydia
- Madalene; Margaret; Marjorie; Maria; Marianne; Marina; Martha; Mary; Mary-Anne (MaryAnn); Matilda; Mercy; Miriam; Modesty
- Nancy; Nellie
- Olivia
- Patience; Peace; Peggy; Penelope (Penny); Phillis (Phyllis); Phoebe; Priscilla; Prudence
- Rachel; Rebecca; Rose; Ruth
- Sally; Sarah; Selina; Sophia; Susan; Susanna (Susannah)
- Tabitha; Teresa; Theodosia
- Unity; Uriana
- Wilhelmina

Men:

- Aaron; Abraham; Adam; Adolphus; Alexander; Algernon; Allan; Americus; Andrew; Anthony; Archibald; Arthur; Augustus; Aylmer
- Baldwin; Barnard; Bamber; Barrington; Benjamin; Benedict; Bernard; Bertram; Brook; Busick
- Carew; Cecil; Chaloner; Chapple; Charles; Christopher; Coape; Colin; Cornelius
- Daniel; David; Donald; Dudley; Duncan
- Edmund; Edward; Edwin; Eli; Elias: Emanuel (Emanual); Ephriam; Erasmus; Ernest; Evan; Ewan; Ezra
- Felton; Francis; Frederick
- George; Gerard; Gibbs; Giles; Gilbert; Graham; Guy
- Harcourt; Harry; Henry; Herbert; Hervey; Hew; Hildebrand; Horace; Horatio; Hudson; Hugh
- Isaac
- Jacob; Jahleel; James; Jasper; Jeffrey; Jeremy; John; Jonathan; Joseph; Josiah; Josias
- Kenneth
- Laurence; Leonard; Levi; Lewis; Lodge; Loftus; Ludlow; Luke
- Mark; Martin; Matthew; Meshach; Michael; Miles; Morgan; Moses
- Nash; Nathaniel; Neil: Nicholas; Noah; Norman
- Obadiah; Oliver; Owen
- Patrick; Percy; Peregrine; Peter; Philip; Phineas
- Rafe; Ralph; Rawden; Reginald; Richard; Robert; Rollo;
- Sampson; Samuel; Seth; Shadrack; Sherborne; Silas; Simeon; Simon; Solomon; Snowley; Soulden; Stapleton; Stephen; Stratford
- Theophile; Thomas; Timothy
- Walter; William

These names came from:

(40) https://sarahs-history-place.blogspot.com/2011/09/regency-era-names.html
(41) https://www.bryndonovan.com/2014/12/08/name-those-regency-era-characters/
(42) https://jobev.com/regname.html
(43) https://avatozeke.com/regency-romance-character-names/

Look at a list of last names of families in Britain and Ireland. This can help you find last names that go with the first names. Last names are just as important as first names!!

(44) https://landedfamilies.blogspot.com/p/list-of-families.html
(45) https://cherylsregencyramblings.wordpress.com/2011/10/02/common-english-surnames/
(46) https://www.wattpad.com/137161629-the-big-book-of-names-regency-era-surnames

Do your own research into names:

(47) https://play.howstuffworks.com/quiz/whats-the-hidden-meaning-of-your-name - take a quiz of your own name to see what it means.

(48) http://www.meaning-of-names.com/ - search the meaning behind the names you've already found, to see if the name you've found fits the characters you're creating.

(49) https://www.behindthename.com/ - the etymology and history of first names

(50) https://www.ssa.gov/oact/babynames/decades/ - discover what names where most used and in what year. Organized in numbers, how many "Jacks" there were each year. Goes back only to the 1880s.

(51) https://www.wattpad.com/120507137-the-big-book-of-names - a list of names for almost any type of story out there!!

Language and speech

The way that the people of the Regency Era spoke was vastly different than what we understand now. The lingo, the grammar, the jargon/slang must be on par to be believable in any romance story. And you're going to have to do your research on this one. I found several sites that can help you with this:

(52) https://www.regrom.com/regency-lingo/

(53) https://www.regrom.com/2020/01/28/regency-words-swear-words/

(54) https://www.janeausten.org/regency-period-glossary.asp

(55) https://candicehern.com/regency-world/glossary/

(56) https://www.georgette-heyer.com/slang.html

(57) https://donnahatch.com/regency-terminology/

(58) https://sharonlathanauthor.com/regency-glossary/

The authors in this list seem to have the most comprehensive lists.

My next suggestion is to watch movies and tv shows that fall in this timeframe! Watching would be a great way to visually see the clothing, the body language, the behavior and so much more!

Here're just a few to check out:

- Bridgerton – tv show new to Netflix!!!
- Pride and Prejudice (1995) - Don't forget the several previous versions of this particular movie!!
- Emma (2009)
- Mansfield Park (1999)
- Northanger Abbey (2007)
- Sense and Sensibility (1995)
- Wuthering Heights (1992)
- Vanity Fair (1998)
- Becoming Jane (2007)

While this is certainly not everything you'll need to think about and create when you're creating your wonderful romance story, it'll get you started!

Needing specific research?? Contact me at romanceauthorva@gmail.com and we'll chat!!

Please sign up to my newsletter at: https://shentalhenrie.com/idea-bible-sign-up/ and you'll get a FREE printable workbook. *The Romance Story Ideas Bible* is a great place to keep track of random story ideas!