BEGC-108
British Literature: 18th Century
July 2026 and January, 2027 Sessions
(Based on Blocks1 -4)

Max. Marks: 100

Attempt all the sections

SECTION A

4 × 5 = 20 Marks

1. Write short notes on the following:

1. Realism in *Robinson Crusoe*.
2. Travel writing in the eighteenth century.
3. Comedy of Manners.
4. Graveyard Poetry.

SECTION B

5 × 10 = 50 Marks

1. Discuss the importance of labour and self-reliance in *Robinson Crusoe*.
2. Comment on Gulliver as the narrator of *Gulliver's Travels*.
3. Discuss the portrayal of the Houyhnhnms and the Yahoos in *Gulliver's Travels*.
4. Examine the character of Millamant in *The Way of the World*.
5. How does Thomas Gray use nature and evening imagery in *Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard*?

SECTION C

2 × 15 = 30 Marks

1. Compare Robinson Crusoe and Gulliver as travellers. How do their journeys change their understanding of themselves and the world?
2. Discuss the themes of death, memory and human equality in Gray's *Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard*.

1. Write short notes on the following:

1. Realism in Robinson Crusoe.

Answer

Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* is regarded as an important early English novel because it makes an extraordinary adventure appear like an actual human experience. Its realism is found less in the unusual event of shipwreck than in the detailed, practical manner in which Crusoe describes his daily life. The story is told in the first person, as though the survivor is recording what he has personally witnessed. Specific places, dates, voyages and objects give the narrative the appearance of a truthful memoir rather than a romantic fantasy.

Defoe pays particular attention to ordinary work. After reaching the island, Crusoe salvages guns, tools, provisions and other useful objects from the wreck. He builds shelter, grows crops, stores grain, domesticates goats and learns to make simple household articles. The reader follows his repeated attempts, failures and gradual improvements. For example, making pottery and bread requires patience and experiments rather than miraculous success. These small practical details create a convincing picture of a person learning to survive under difficult conditions.

Crusoe also keeps an account of his resources and divides his experiences into advantages and disadvantages. This habit resembles the record-keeping of a merchant, revealing the commercial spirit of eighteenth-century England. His calculation of time and property suggests that economic thinking shapes even his life in isolation. His fears, loneliness, illnesses and religious reflections are also represented as changing states of mind. The narrative thus combines physical reality with psychological realism.

Yet Defoe's realism does not mean complete neutrality. Crusoe frequently views land, labour and Friday through a European, Protestant and colonial outlook. His account can be detailed and believable while still expressing the assumptions and inequalities of his age. This tension makes the novel interesting to modern readers. Its lasting achievement is to show that the ordinary routines of work, anxiety, planning and moral reflection can become the centre of a compelling literary narrative.