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**Ans to question no: 1**

[Postmodernism](https://www.britannica.com/topic/postmodernism-philosophy) is a late 20th-century movement in philosophy and literary theory that generally questions the basic assumptions of [Western philosophy](https://www.britannica.com/topic/Western-philosophy) in the modern period (roughly, the 17th century through the 19th century)

Postmodern literature is a literary movement that eschews absolute meaning and instead emphasizes play, fragmentation, metafiction, and intertextuality. The literary movement rose to prominence in the late 1950s and early 1960s as a reaction to modernist literature’s quest for meaning in light of the significant human rights violations of World War II.

Common examples of postmodern literature include Gravity’s Rainbow by Thomas Pynchon, Slaughterhouse-Five by Kurt Vonnegut, and Catch-22 by Joseph Heller. Literary theorists that crystallized postmodernity in the literature include Roland Barthes, Jean Baudrillard, Jacques Derrida, Jorge Luis Borges, Fredric Jameson, Michel Foucault, and Jean-François Lyotard.

**5 Characteristics of Postmodern Literature**

Postmodern literature builds on the following core ideas:

1. **Embrace randomness**. Postmodern works reject the idea of absolute meaning and instead embrace randomness and disorder. Postmodern novels often employ [unreliable narrators](https://www.masterclass.com/articles/what-is-an-unreliable-narrator-4-ways-to-create-an-unreliable-narrator-in-writing) to further muddy the waters with extreme subjectivity and prevent readers from finding meaning during the story.
2. **Playfulness**. While modernist writers mourned the loss of order, postmodern writers revel in it, often using tools like [black humor](https://www.masterclass.com/articles/how-to-write-dark-humor), wordplay, [irony](https://www.masterclass.com/articles/what-is-irony-different-types-of-irony-in-literature-plus-tips-on-how-to-use-irony-in-writing), and other techniques of playfulness to dizzy readers and muddle the story.
3. **Fragmentation**. Postmodernist literature took modernism’s fragmentation and expanded on it, moving literary works more toward collage-style forms, temporal distortion, and significant jumps in character and place.
4. **Metafiction**. Postmodern literature emphasized meaninglessness and play. Postmodern writers began to experiment with more meta elements in their novels and [short stories](https://www.masterclass.com/articles/how-to-write-a-great-short-story-writing-tips-and-exercises-for-story-ideas), drawing attention to their work’s artifice and reminding readers that the author isn’t an authority figure.
5. **Intertextuality**. As a form of collage-style writing, many postmodern authors wrote their work overtly in dialogue with other texts. The techniques they employed included pastiche (or imitating other authors’ styles) and the combination of high and low culture (writing that tackles subjects that were previously considered inappropriate for literature).

Modernism was a literary movement that began in the late 1880s and continued through the 1930s. Modernist writers focused on industrialization (as in creating new machines and building cities) and how the setup of industrialized societies isolated people from each other. This is the atmosphere in which ''The Metamorphosis'' was published, so it's not really any surprise there is a modernist theme throughout the story.

*The Metamorphosis* (in German, *Die Verwandlung*) is Kafka's most famous work, first published in 1915. Shown here is the cover of the first edition. The story begins with a traveling salesman, Gregor Samsa, waking to find himself transformed into a giant "monstrous vermin"

The metamorphosis, as mentioned above, is a work of fiction written by Franz Kafka. the most of the obvious concept that influenced Kafka in writing The Metamorphosis is Existentialism. Existentialism is a theory that became very popular during the nineteenth century and that asserts that any given choice will govern the later course of a person’s life and that the person has ultimate will over making choices. In the case of Kafka’s story, this translates first into solitude and alienation.

Kafka was one of the most important writers of the twentieth century. His influence has been widely felt across a spectrum of writers from different nationalities. The term "kafkaesque" was created to describe the kind of nightmarish situations like those faced by Josef K., the hero of his novel *The Trial*, who finds himself the victim of the bizarre logic of an inexorable court judgment. Magic realism in particular owes a great deal to Kafka, but almost every modernist and post-modernist writer has been influenced by the menacing atmosphere of his works.

There are two major reasons this novel can count as modernist literature—firstly, the themes Kafka deals with within the novel, and secondly, the way that he writes it.

Kafka’s novel deals with several themes that were specifically addressed by modernist writers, the major one being disillusioned with or ostracized from mainstream society (no quicker way to do that than to have your main character turn into a bug).

Secondly, the novel is written in a stream-of-consciousness style, which garnered particular use among modernist writers and in this case, has the added effect of compounding the confusion, frustration, and fright expressed by the cast of characters throughout the novel.

Kafka wrote stories about people who are doomed to suffer some fate, their valiant and repeated efforts to avoid or deal with those desperate problems, and their ultimate inability to change their fate.

It has been many years since I read the story. In thinking about the story recently, it seems to me that it could easily symbolize the feelings and experiences of a person who has suddenly become bedridden with a terminal illness, as well as those of his family. A very ill person may imagine himself to be like a bug since he may no longer be able to walk and would only be able to crawl to go anywhere. In his delirium he may imagine himself being able to crawl on walls and ceilings.

The following descriptions of the main character and his family might also have described a terminally ill patient and his family during the time the story was written:

He is no longer able:

to financially support his family,

to look human,

to eat normal human food,

to function socially or communicate as a human being,

He is avoided and isolated.

His family is ashamed and afraid of him.

His condition causes stress and hardship for the family.

His efforts to interact with his family lead to one disaster and rejection after another.

Finally, in the end, he resigns himself to his fate and decides that dying is the only thing he can do to help his family, by releasing them from the burden he has become.

After he dies, the only thing left is a dried-up husk. The same could said of a human body that has wasted away during a long illness.

Later, his parents and their young daughter take a vacation by train. The parents notice how much the daughter has grown up during the ordeal and are uplifted with new hope for the future, now that the long ordeal is behind them.

The influence of existentialism on Kafka’s metamorphosis doesn’t only stop to the concept of alienation. The Metamorphosis is also about disillusionment. Besides being isolated, Gregor starts viewing the life as somehow absurd and futile. He can’t seem to understand why things like this happen to a good human being like him. All he is trying to do is to make his family happy. He works at a job that he despises so that he can support his family he is having hard time. We can quote him saying: “If I didn’t have my parents to think about, I’d have given in my notice a long time ago, I’d have gone up to the boss and told him just what I think, tell him everything I would, let him know just what I feel”. Despite all this good he is doing; the tragedy of the metamorphosis befalls him, and his family abandons him.

As time passes by, Gregor’s disillusion grows bigger. His body falls into a state of despair due to abuse neglect and sickness. He carried threads, hairs, and remains of food about on his back and sides. He spent his days fantasizing about being normal and wondering why this was happening to him. One thing that really shows the influence of the Existentialist philosophy on Kafka is that he doesn’t want us to feel bad for Gregor. Instead, the impression I get from reading this is that Kafka wants Gregor to find meaning to his life even though he is in a bad situation. He should have stopped being depressed because of his family and his job and started living life for himself first. If we follow Kafka’s reasoning, we can assume that Gregor’s death is due more to the fact that he was disillusioned and depressed than to the fact that his physical health was deteriorating.

To sum up, one can say that the Modernism movement brought forth new ideas to the world of literature and the Metamorphosis is a good example of that. As the world around them was evolving, authors like Kafka and Camus looked for other sciences for inspiration and to explain some of human behaviors. Existentialism provided them with a means to convey their feelings, especially regarding isolation, alienation, and the meaning of life in general. Nowadays, because of the quality of their works, they became household names not only in literature but also in other fields such as psychology.

Through the story, Kafka let us understand the consciousness of Gregor. We were able to understand what he was thinking. The language of the literature was confusing and fragmental. This made it very hard to understand at times. There was always a deeper meaning to what the author was trying to get across. Within the literature, there were also predominant themes. Gregor had a loss of meaning, loss of hope, and alienation. When he became an insect, he suffered from alienation from his family. At the end, he ended up leaving the family for the family’s sake. Gregor also lost all hope because he was not able to help his family out with financial needs. Even though Gregor probably did not realize it, his transformation helped his family out. It forced his father to get a job. This led to him looking better physically and providing for the family. Many stories during the modernist era were very sad and unpleasant. Modernism and Metamorphosis explained that people during the modernist era did not want to ready happy and successful pieces of work because they could not achieve that in their daily lives. Other characteristics of Modernism include Gregor’s work problems. He was a travel salesman. This led to him unable to create friendships. I think he also uses this as an excuse. He feels obligated to take care of his family financially.

As with all of Kafka's works, *The Metamorphosis* is open to a wide range of interpretations; in fact, Stanley Corngold's book, *The Commentator's Despair*, lists over 130 interpretations. Most obvious are themes relating to society's treatment of those who are different and the effect of bourgeois society and [bureaucracy](https://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Bureaucracy) on the human spirit and the loneliness and isolation of the individual in modern society. Food plays an ambiguous role as both the source of sustenance and also as a weapon and instrument of death.

An analysis of Kafka’s *The Metamorphosis* makes evident the deliberate use of the absurd to diminish the emotional turmoil experienced when reading about Gregor’s situation. For example, when a newly transformed Gregor attempts to get out of bed, he recognizes the absurdity of his situation. While this challenge brings him immense “misery” (Kafka 417), “he [cannot] suppress a smile at the thought of [calling for help]” (Kafka 417). His struggle can be said to evoke the silencing of those who are suffering from mental health issues but at the same time, Kafka adds a lighter perspective by offering a comical image. The fact that the comedy is even recognized by the character himself further shows the versatility of the absurd.

Another instance of the absurd in *The Metamorphosis*is when Gregor’s father throws apples at him. The thought of Gregor “shying apple after apple” (Kafka 435) is a funny image. This can be read as a commentary on the ridiculousness of war, as well as a metaphor for the Samsa parents’ imposition of Judeo-Christian and conservative values on Gregor. Since apples are associated with the creation story, they have a religious connotation of temptation and knowledge. Gregor cannot dodge these forceful ideological impositions, which also emphasizes Kafka’s personal stance towards these outdated religious and conservative ideals. Kafka continues to poke fun at religion when he describes Gregor being “nailed to the spot” (Kafka 436). This reference to crucifixion provides support for the fact that his parents have flawed values. On the other hand, however, it can also be seen as a joke. Usually, those who sacrifice themselves are celebrated. In this case, however, after Gregor sacrifices himself by working hard to support his family, he turns into a giant insect and becomes an outcast.[5] In addition Gregor also sacrifices himself by deciding to die rather than continuing to burden his family yet is reproached rather than celebrated. These instances of the absurd, along with numerous others in this work, prove that its use allows us to gain insight into serious topics such as religion and alienation while still making us laugh.