

*An Essay on Man: First Stanza*  
Alexander Pope

1733

Courtesy of *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*, Seventh Edition



Annenberg/CPB • [www.learner.org](http://www.learner.org)  
Corporation for Public Broadcasting Copyright 2003

*An Essay on Man: First Stanza*  
Alexander Pope

Awake, my St. John! leave all meaner things  
To low ambition, and the pride of kings.  
Let us (since life can little more supply  
Than just to look about us and to die)  
Expatiate free o'er all this scene of man;  
A mighty maze! but not without a plan;  
A wild, where weeds and flow'rs promiscuous shoot;  
Or garden, tempting with forbidden fruit.  
Together let us beat this ample field,  
Try what the open, what the covert yield;  
The latent tracts, the giddy heights explore  
Of all who blindly creep, or sightless soar;  
Eye Nature's walks, shoot folly as it flies,  
And catch the manners living as they rise;  
Laugh where we must, be candid where we can;  
But vindicate the ways of God to man.