Basic definitions:

*Dissent/nonconformity* - Protestant sects and denominations not part of the established Churches of England/Wales, Scotland and Ireland [e.g. Baptists, Congregationalists, Quakers, Presbyterians]

*Toleration* – Enlightenment and Whig idea of allowing certain rights to Dissenters.

*Penal Laws* – restrictions on Catholics on practising their religion, serving in office and holding land; repealed in part by acts of 1778, 1791 and 1829.

*Test and Corporation Acts* – prevented Dissenters from serving in office; repealed in 1828.

‘High Church’ – those in the Church of England who preferred an emphasis on the sacraments and the liturgy.

*Evangelical* – those in the Church of England who favoured a missionary style of worship; emphasis on the scriptures.

*evangelicalism* – as above, but encompasses Dissenters as well.

*Presbyterianism* – the denomination of the Church of Scotland after 1690; organised in assemblies called presbyteries rather than episcopal government (bishops).

*Methodism* – section of the Church of England/Wales begun by John Wesley in the 1740s; split from the Church of England/Wales in the 1810s.

*Unitarianism* – established from 1774, though not entirely legal until 1813; denies the doctrine of the Trinity; a form of ‘rational’ Dissent.

Some key individuals:

John Wesley (1703-1791);
Joseph Priestley (1733-1804)
Richard Price (1723-1791);
Hannah More (1745-1833);
Joanna Southcott (1750-1814)

Further reading: