

## OUTLINE OF AMERICAN LITERATURE

### THE EARLIEST AMERICAN LITERATURE (1600-1750)

1. BEFORE 1600'S NATIVE AMERICAN LITERATURE-THE ORAL TRADITION;  
POETRY AND RHYTHMIC PROSE, RELIGIOUS IN NATURE, DESIGNED TO BE CHANTED OR ENACTED.
2. COLONIAL LEGISLATURE: SPIRITUAL OR PRAGMATIC  
RELIGIOUS POETRY, HISTORIES, DIARIES, SERMONS, EDUCATIONAL TEXTS
  - A. OF PLYMOUTH PLANTATION: WILLIAM BRADFORD  
HISTORY OF THE PILGRIMS' VOYAGE ON THE MAYFLOWER AND SETTLEMENT AT CAPE COD.
  - B. THE GENERAL HISTORY OF VIRGINIA BY JOHN SMITH  
HISTORY OF THE JAMESTOWN SETTLEMENT
  - C. THE MASSACHUSETTS BAY PSALM BOOK- PURITAN TEXTS  
THE NEW ENGLAND PRIMER
  - D. ANNE BRADSTREET AND EDWARD TAYLOR- PURITAN POETS  
VERY RELIGIOUS POETRY
  - E. PHILLIS WHEATLY- AFRICAN AMERICAN POETESS
  - F. JONATHAN EDWARDS- PURITAN SERMONS
  - G. SALEM COURT DOCUMENTS- WITCHCRAFT TRIALS

### THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION (1750-1800) THE AGE OF REASON (NEOCLASSIC)

1. THE REBELLION WAS INFLUENCED BY EUROPEAN THEORISTS:  
LOCKE, MONTAIGNE, ROUSSEAU, VOLTAIRE. THEY INFLUENCED THOMAS PAINE, BEN FRANKLIN, THOMAS JEFFERSON.
2. DEISM: A SET OF BELIEFS IDENTIFIED WITH THE AGE OF REASON  
THINKERS WHICH REJECTED FORMAL RELIGION & SUPERNATURAL REVELATION. RATIONAL APPROACH. DID BELIEVE IN GOD BUT BELIEVED THAT HARMONY IN NATURE DEMONSTRATED HIS EXISTENCE.
3. WRITING- PRAGMATIC, UTILITARIAN, -LITERATURE DIRECTLY RESPONSIBLE FOR AFFECTING SOCIAL AND POLITICAL CHANGE.
4. LETTERS FROM AN AMERICAN FARMER: JEAN DE CREVECOEUR COMMENTS ON EUROPEAN IMMIGRANTS-COINED THE PHRASE "MELTING POT"
5. THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF BENJAMIN FRANKLIN- TYPIFIES THE AGE OF REASON THOUGHTS- EMPHASIS ON MORAL PERFECTION, SUBDUING EMOTIONS AND NATURAL INSTINCTS. CONCERN WITH SOCIAL GOOD.
6. POOR RICHARD'S ALMANAC- BENJAMIN FRANKLIN  
POPULAR WORK CONTAINING FRANKLIN APHORISMS CONCERNING HUMAN BEHAVIOR; I.E. "A ROLLING STONE GATHERS NO MOSS."
7. SPEECH IN THE VIRGINIA CONVENTION: PATRICK HENRY URGES REVOLUTION

8. THE CRISIS & COMMON SENSE BY THOMAS PAINE, PAMPHLET URGES AND SUPPORTS REVOLUTIONARY CAUSES. PRINCIPLES OF REASON-IMPORTANCE OF SOCIAL GOOD OVER INDIVIDUAL GOOD; REASON OVER EMOTION AND SUPERSTITION.
9. MERCY OTIS WARREN-SATIRICAL PLAYS, ESSAYS SUPPORTING REVOLUTION
10. THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE: THOMAS JEFFERSON STRESSES SOCIAL GOOD-AGAIN EMPHASIS ON SOCIETY OVER THE INDIVIDUAL. RATIONAL LISTING OF COLONISTS' GRIEVANCES.

DEVELOPING A NATIONAL LITERATURE (1800-1850)

GROWTH OF THE ROMANTIC TRADITION AS A REACTION AGAINST CLASSICAL APPROACH OF EIGHTEENTH CENTURY.  
CORRESPONDED WITH A GROWTH OF DEMOCRACY IN POLITICS.

COMPARE:

<u>CLASSICISTS</u>	<u>ROMANTICS</u>
EMPHASIZE SOCIETY	EMPHASIZE INDIVIDUAL
EMPHASIZE REASON, ANALYSIS	EMPHASIZE EMOTION, CREATIVITY
CONVENTIONAL	UNCONVENTIONAL
CONCERN WITH PUBLIC MATTERS	CONCERN WITH PRIVATE MATTERS
CONSERVATIVE	DISRUPTIVE
CONCERN WITH SOCIAL ORDER	CONCERN WITH SOCIAL FREEDOM
DOES NOT QUESTION VALUES	EXPLORED, QUESTIONED

SHORT STORY WRITERS:

1. WASHINGTON IRVING- THE SKETCHBOOK INCLUDING "THE DEVIL & TOM WALKER", "RIP VAN WINKLE", "THE LEGEND OF SLEEPY HOLLOW".  
IMP.-BECAUSE IRVING PROVED AMERICA HAD A HISTORY AND COULD WRITE LEGENDS BASED ON AMERICAN SETTINGS.
2. NATHANIEL HAWTHORNE-THE SCARLET LETTER, THE HOUSE OF SEVEN GABLES. SHORT STORIES  
REACTION AGAINST THE INTOLERANCE OF PURITANISM.  
ROMANTIC BECAUSE HE EXPLORES HUMAN MOTIVATION. THE INDIVIDUAL.
3. HERMAN MELVILLE: MOBY DICK, SHORT STORY-"BARTLEBY THE SCRIVENER".  
ROMANTIC-EXPLORES AGAIN HUMAN LONELINESS AND CONFLICT. PROBES PSYCHOLOGICAL REASONS.
4. EDGAR ALLEN POE- "THE TELL TALE HEART", "THE PIT AND THE PENDULUM"

POETRY-"THE RAVEN", "ANNABEL LEE"

ANOTHER OF THE "BROODING ROMANTICS" (HAWTHORNE & MELVILLE).  
EXPLORED THE DARKER SIDE OF MAN'S NATURE. INSPIRED BY 18<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY  
GOTHIC LITERATURE. FORERUNNER OF MODERN DETECTIVE AND HORROR  
STORIES.

POETS:

WILLIAM CULLEN BRYANT: "THANATOPSIS" (A VIEW OF DEATH)  
RELATIONSHIP WITH NATURE. OPTIMISTIC, EMOTIONAL.  
ROMANTICIZED VIEW OF DEATH.

OLIVER WENDALL HOLMES: "THE CHAMBERED NAUTILUS"  
A ROMANTICIZED VIEW OF LIFE AND DEATH...DRAWS UPON  
NATURE TO EXPLAIN LIFE'S MYSTERIES.

JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL FIRESIDE POETS

HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW EMPHASIZING NATURE, EMOTIONS

JOHN GREENLEAF WHITTIER SOME NARRATIVE

THE TRANSCENDENTALISTS:

TRANSCENDENTALISM IS A FORM OF ROMANTICISM. A SYSTEM OF THOUGHT  
FORMULATED BY EMERSON AND HIS FOLLOWERS. THE DIAL THEIR JOURNAL.  
BROOKS FARM-THEIR UTOPIAN COMMUNITY.

PHILOSOPHY:

1. ALL HUMAN BEINGS HAVE "GOD IN US."
2. HUMAN SPIRITUALITY IS REFLECTED IN NATURE.
3. BELIEF IN THE "OVERSOUL"-THE ULTIMATE SPIRITUAL FORCE THAT  
ENCOMPASSES ALL EXISTENCE AND OF WHICH EVERY PERSON IS A PART.
4. IMPORTANCE OF THE INDIVIDUAL.
5. STRESSED INTUITION ("INNER LIGHTS") OVER REASON.

RALPH WALDO EMERSON-SELF RELIANCE (ESSAY), THE RHODONA (POEM)

PRIMARILY AN ESSAYIST. THE MOST IMPORTANT SPIRITUAL VOICE OF HIS  
GENERATION.

QUOTES: "WHO SO WOULD BE A MAN MUST BE A NONCONFORMIST."

"A FOOLISH CONSISTENCY IS THE HOBGLOBIN OF LITTLE MINDS."

HENRY DAVID THOREAU-WALDEN ("EXPERIMENT IN ESSENTIAL LIVING")

DISCIPLE OF EMERSON-PRACTICED EMERSON'S THEORIES

CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE: FAMOUS THOREAU ESSAY. WRITTEN AFTER JAIL STAY  
FOR REFUSAL TO PAY A POLL TAX WHICH WOULD SUPPORT SLAVERY  
AND MEXICAN-AMERICAN WAR. STRONG TRANSCENDENTAL  
STATEMENT URGING CITIZENS TO PROTEST GOVT. POLICIES THAT  
REQUIRE ONE TO BE "THE AGENT OF INJUSTICE TO ANOTHER".  
(DOCUMENT HAS INFLUENCED GANDHI AND MARTIN LUTHER KING).

A NATIONAL CONSCIENCE (1855-1900)

A GRADUAL MOVE FROM ROMANTICISM TO REALISM.

THE CIVIL WAR, SLAVERY WAS A SUBJECT FOR MANY WRITERS.

PREJUDICE AGAINST WOMEN, BLACKS, & INDIANS INSPIRES LITERATURE OF  
REFORM.

THE INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION, IMPROVEMENTS IN TECHNOLOGY, TRANSPORTATION, THE MIGRATION WEST, THE WAVE OF IMMIGRATION PROVIDED A SPIRIT OF OPTIMISM AND EXHUBERANCE FROM WRITERS.

WALT WHITMAN'S POETRY-EXPRESSED A SPIRIT OF NATIONALISM SHOWING A NATION OF INDIVIDUALS UNITED BY A COMMON TRAGEDY (CIVIL WAR) AND INSPIRED BY HOPE FROM THE FUTURE.

A TYPE OF REALISM AROSE IN "LOCAL COLOR" WRITERS WHO PORTRAYED CUSTOMS, ATTITUDES, DIALECTS, AND CHARACTERS OF A REGION WITH ATTENTION TO REALISTIC DETAIL. REGIONALIST WRITERS.

THE TRAIN OF EVENTS BY THE LATE 1800'S-ESPECIALLY THE PROBLEMS INHERENT IN THE POPULATION SHIFT TO INDUSTRIAL CITIES (SLUMS-DISTINCT DIVISION BETWEEN RICH AND POOR, EXPLOITATION OF LABOR FORCE) FIRMLY ENTRENCHED THE REALIST APPROACH IN WRITING

IMPORTANT WORKS AND AUTHORS:

1. THE NARRATIVE OF THE LIFE OF FREDERICK DOUGLASS-AUTOBIOGRAPHY WHICH EXPOSED SLAVERY AS DEHUMANIZING, "SOUL-KILLING."
2. THE GETTYSBURG ADDRESS- LINCOLN
3. AMBROSE BIENCE- "OCCURRENCE AT OWL CREEK BRIDGE"  
LOOKED AT THE FUTILITY AND GRIM REALITY OF CIVIL WAR-  
COUNTERPOINT TO ROMANTICISM. AN EXPONENT OF REALISM.
4. STEPHEN CRANE  
MAGGIE, GIRL OF THE STREETS- REALISTIC LOOK AT N.Y. SLUM LIFE.  
RED BADGE OF COURAGE- USE CIVIL WAR AS A SETTING TO STRIP AWAY ROMANTIC NOTIONS OF WAR.
5. WALT WHITMAN:  
LEAVES OF GRASS- VOLUME OF POETRY

TRANSCENDENTAL ELEMENTS-A SPIRIT OF OPTIMISM, HOPE, NATIONALISM  
REALIST-DID NOT OVERLOOK THE "UGLY" FACE OF AMERICA AND THE GRIM REALITIES OF LIFE

IMPORTANT IN A LITERARY SENSE-BROKE AWAY FROM TRADITIONAL VERSE FORMS- FAU VERSE, FRANK, EXPLICIT.

6. EMILY DICKENSON: THE RECLUSE POET OF AMHERST, MASSACHUSETTS IN HER SOLITARY WORLD TREATED UNIVERSAL THEMES OF LOVE, DEATH, IMMORTALITY, AND NATURE WITH FRANKNESS, HONESTY. LIKE WHITMAN, DEPARTED FROM CONVENTIONAL POEM FORMS.
7. BRET HARTE- "THE OUTCASTS OF POKENFLAT"  
AN EXAMPLE OF A "LOCAL COLOR" WRITER USING THE WESTERN FRONTIER AS A BACKGROUND
8. MARK TWAIN- (SAMUEL CLEMENS) TOM SAWYER, HUCKLEBERRY FINN
  1. USED AUTHENTIC DIALECTS- A "LOCAL COLOR" WRITER
  2. PROGRESSED FROM LIGHTER THEMES TO HEAVIER. USED A GREAT DEAL OF SOCIAL COMMENTARY IN LATER WORKS (I.E. SLAVERY-HUCK FINN)
  3. A LECTURER, A HUMORIST, A SATIRIST

9. KATE CHOPIN - THE AWAKENING  
 " LOCAL COLOR" - LOUISIANA ( CREOLES, CAJUNS, BLACKS)  
 TREATED REALISTIC THEMES, NEVER BEFORE DEALT WITH -  
 SEX , INFIDELITY , PERSONAL PROBLEMS OF WOMEN, RACIAL  
 PROBLEMS.
10. WILLA CATHER - MY ANTONIA, DEATH COMES TO THE ARCHBISHOP  
 " LOCAL COLOR " -WEST & SOUTHWEST  
A SELECTIVE REALIST - DEPICTS STARK REALITIES OF FRONTIER  
 LIFE - IDEALIZES THE COURAGE & SPIRIT OF PIONEERS.
11. HENRY JAMES - THE AMBASSADORS, " THE ART OF FICTION" ( ESSAY)  
 BEST KNOWN FOR ESSAY. PAVED THE WAY FOR WRITERS TO  
 EXPERIMENT ( AS ARTISTS) - NOT CONFORM TO STANDARDS.  
 "ART FOR ART'S SAKE"
12. SHERWOOD ANDERSON - WINESBURG, OHIO ( EARLY 1900'S )  
 OPEN-ENDED SHORT STORIES. COINED THE TERM " GROTESQUE"  
 MEANING PEOPLE WHO ALLOWED ONE BELIEF ON AMBITION TO  
 DEVOUR THEM. LONELINESS, ISOLATION - THEMES.  
 SETTING - MIDWEST.
13. F. SCOTT FITZGERALD- THE GREAT GATSBY ( 1930 - 1940)  
 EXPOSED THEMES DEALING W. THE AMERICAN DREAM.  
 THE " ROARING 20'S ". LIFE IN AMERICA FOR THE WEALTHY AFTER  
 WWI. DEALT WITH MISPLACED VALUES - PARTICULARLY \$ -  
 DISILLUSIONMENT. BECAME PART OF THE "LOST GENERATION"  
 - EXPATRIATES WHO FLED TO PARIS, UNHAPPY ABOUT SITUATION  
 IN AMERICA.
14. T. S. ELIOT- (1898-1965) " THE WASTELAND " -MATERIALISM,  
 SPIRITUAL DEATH
15. ERNEST HEMINGWAY ( 1920 - 1950 ) THE OLD MAN AND THE SEA, THE SUN  
 ALSO RISES, FAREWELL TO ARMS  
 STACCATO, JOURNALISTIC PROSE  
 VIEW OF LIFE AS A GAME- WHERE HUMANS ARE ULTIMATELY  
 DEFEATED  
 THE HEMINGWAY " HERO" - MEN TESTED BY PAIN, DANGER, ALSO  
 PART OF " LOST GENERATION"
16. BERNARD MALAMUD (1930 - 19 - \_\_ ) THE NATURAL  
 JEWISH WRITER. USED THE SUFFERING , WANDERING JEW TO  
 DEPICT HUMAN CONDITION, WRITERS OF HUMAN SUFFERING-  
 REDEMPTIVE POWER OF LOVE.
17. JOHN STEINBECK - ( 1902 - 1968 ) THE GRAPES OF WRATH, IN DUBIOUS BATTLE,  
 OF MICE AND MEN, STORIES OF ORDINARY PEOPLE CAUGHT UP IN  
 GREAT DEPRESSION OF 1930'S. CALIFORNIA - MAJOR SETTING.  
 GRAPES OF WRATH TELLS OF THE WESTWARD MIGRATION OF JOAD  
 FAMILY TO WORK AS FRUIT PICKERS IN CA. THEIR PROBLEMS SHOW  
 THAT THE WESTERN FRONTIER WITH ITS PROMISE WAS A PLACE OF  
 MISERY & BROKEN DREAMS - IMPORTANT THOUGH - HE SHOWS THE  
 HUMAN SPIRIT SURVIVES.
18. EUDORA WELTY - MISSISSIPPI DURING DEPRESSION
19. WILLIAM FAULKNER - THE SOUND AND THE FURY, THE HAMLET  
 INFLUENCED BY ANDERSON. YOKNAPATAWPHA- HIS FICTIONAL  
 COUNTY IN MISSISSIPPI PEOPLED BY FAMILIES GOING THROUGH  
 RECONSTRUCTION IN SOUTH. INFLUENCED BY FREUD & JUNG.  
 EXPERIMENTED WITH NEW TECHNIQUES - " INTERIOR MONOLOGUE"  
 STREAM OF CONSCIOUSNESS." EXAMINED DECAY OF VALUES,  
 TRADITIONS IN THE SOUTH.

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AMONG SIGNIFICANT TRENDS IN 20<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY WAS THE FLOWERING OF WOMEN WRITERS AND MINORITY WRITERS- EMERGENCE OF SCIENCE FICTION.

WOMEN

KATE BOYLE  
FLANNERY O'CONNOR  
RACHEL CARSON  
SHIRLEY JACKSON  
GINA BERRIALLT

BLACKS

JAMES BALDWIN  
LORRAINE HANSBEARY

SCI FI.

ISAAC ASSIMOV  
RAY BRADBURY  
ALDOUS HUXLEY

MODERN POETRY- HIGHLY INFLUENCED BY WHITMAN, DICKENSON \*

EDGAR LEE MASTERS  
EDWIN ARLINGTON ROBINSON  
VACHEL LINDSAY  
CARL SANDBURG  
ROBERT FROST

POETS OF THE LAND AND THE PEOPLE  
WROTE ABOUT AN AGRARIAN SOCIETY  
STILL EXISTING IN EARLY 1900'S  
"REGIONALIST"

AMY LOWEL  
WILLIAM CARLOS WILLIAMS  
H.D. (HILDA DOOLITTLE)

KNOWN FOR EXPERIMENTATION  
WITH IMAGES & FORM  
ORIENTAL INFLUENCE, HAIKU

EZRA POUND  
E.E. CUMMINGS

IMAGISM- USE OF EVERYDAY SPEECH  
TO PRESENT HARD, CLEAR IMAGES

PAUL LAURENCE DUNBAR  
COUNTEE CULLEN  
CLAUDE MCCAY  
LANGSTON HUGHES

BLACK HARLEM RENAISSANCE POETS  
1920'S

IMPORTANT DRAMATISTS

EUGENE O'NEIL- LONG DAY'S JOURNEY INTO NIGHT

THORNTON WILDER- OUR TOWN

TENNESSEE WILLIAMS- GLASS MENAGERIE

ARTHUR MILLER- DEATH OF A SALESMAN, THE CRUCIBLE, ALL MY SONS