



American Literature - Major

Topics on the list:

The students are expected to have a general knowledge of the topic – the main characteristics of the period/genre/movement, its impact on the history of American literature, the major authors and works. The two main secondary sources on the topics are listed below.

Authors on the list:

A general knowledge of their position in the context of the history of American literature is expected (not their biography!).

Works on the list:

- a) underlined works must be read in their entirety and detailed knowledge of them is expected.
- b) for the other works, a general knowledge of the content, themes, style and the importance in the context of the history of American Literature is expected.

Recommended secondary sources on the topics in the history of American literature:

Richard Gray. *A Brief History of American Literature*. Malden: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011.

Robert S. Levine, ed. *The Norton Anthology of American Literature 9th Edition*, New York and London, W. W. Norton & Company, 2016. (We recommend especially the introductions to major periods and writers.)

1. American Romanticism

James Fenimore Cooper: *The Last of the Mohicans*

Edgar Allan Poe: “The Tell-Tale Heart”, “The Fall of the House of Usher”, “The Purloined Letter”, “The Black Cat”, “The Gold Bug”, “William Wilson: A Tale”, “The Man of the Crowd”, “The Masque of the Red Death”, “The Cask of Amontillado”, “The Philosophy of Composition”, “The Raven”, “Annabel Lee”

2. Transcendentalism

Ralph Waldo Emerson: *Nature*, “Self-Reliance”

Henry David Thoreau: *Walden, or Life in the Woods*

3. Mid 19th Century Fiction

Nathaniel Hawthorne: *The Scarlet Letter*, “Young Goodman Brown”

Herman Melville: *Moby Dick*, “Bartleby, the Scrivener”



Louisa May Alcott: *Little Women*

4. African American and Abolitionist Literature in the 19th Century

Harriett Beecher Stowe: *Uncle Tom's Cabin*

Harriett Jacobs: *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*

5. Birth of American Poetry

Walt Whitman: "Song of Myself" (1881 edition of *Leaves of Grass*)

Emily Dickinson: 1247 To pile like Thunder to its close, 1755 To make a prairie it takes a clover and one bee, 613 They shut me up in Prose –, 1448 How soft a Caterpillar steps –, 112 (67) Success is counted sweetest, 124 (216) Safe in their Alabaster Chambers, 260 (288) I'm Nobody, 764 (754) My Life had stood - a Loaded Gun

6. Regionalism, Realism and Naturalism

Mark Twain: *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*

Henry James: *The Portrait of a Lady*, "The Figure in the Carpet"

Kate Chopin: *The Awakening*, "At the 'Cadian Ball'"

7. Early 20th Century Fiction

Willa Cather: *My Ántonia*

8. American Modernist Poetry

Robert Frost: "Mending Wall", "Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening", "The Road Not Taken", "The Gift Outright"

T. S. Eliot: *The Waste Land*, "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock"

Ezra Pound: "In a Station of the Metro", "Canto I"

William Carlos Williams: "The Red Wheelbarrow", "This Is Just to Say"

Marianne Moore: "A Grave", "Poetry", "Paper Nautilus"

9. Lost Generation and Fiction Between the World Wars

F. Scott Fitzgerald: *The Great Gatsby*

Ernest Hemingway: *The Sun Also Rises*, "Hills like White Elephants"



William Faulkner: *As I Lay Dying*

10. 20th Century American Drama

Tennessee Williams: *A Streetcar Named Desire*

Lorraine Hansberry: *A Raisin in the Sun*

Tony Kushner: *Angels in America*

11. 20th Century African American Literature

Zora Neale Hurston: *Their Eyes Were Watching God*

Langston Hughes: “I, Too”, “The Negro Speaks of Rivers”, “Harlem (2)”, “America”, “The Weary Blues”

Tony Morrison: *Beloved*

12. American Fiction of the Second Half of the 20th Century

J. D. Salinger: *The Catcher in the Rye*

Flannery O’Connor: “A Good Man is Hard to Find” (story only)

Vladimir Nabokov: *Lolita*

Harper Lee: *To Kill a Mockingbird*

Thomas Pynchon: *Crying of Lot 49*

Cormac McCarthy: *Child of God*

13. American Poetry of the Second Half of the 20th Century

Allan Ginsberg: *Howl*

Elizabeth Bishop: “The Moose”, “In the Waiting Room”, “One Art”, “At the Fishhouses”

Sylvia Plath: “Morning Song”, “Wintering”, “Tulips”, “Daddy”

Louise Glück: “The Wild Iris ” (poem)

14. Native American Literature of the 19th and 20th Century

Zitkala-Sá: “The School Days of an Indian Girl”



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Leslie Marmon Silko: *Ceremony*

N. Scott Momaday: *House Made of Dawn*

15. U.S. Minority Literature of the Second Half of the 20th Century

Sandra Cisneros: “Woman Hollering Creek”

Jhumpa Lahiri: *Interpreter of Maladies*