

# ARCHANA NET JRF



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# American Literary Periods

It began long ago



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Native Americans

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Puritanism

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Rationalism

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Romanticism

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Transcendentalism

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Realism

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Modernism

8

Harlem Renaissance

9

Contemporary





## Period name: *Native Americans*

- Arrived 40,000 - 20,000 B.C





## Period Characteristics:

- Oral Literature: epic narratives, creation myths, stories, poems, songs.
- Use stories to teach **moral lessons** and convey practical information about the **natural world**.





- Deep respect for **nature** and **animals**
- Cyclical world view
- Figurative language: **parallelism**

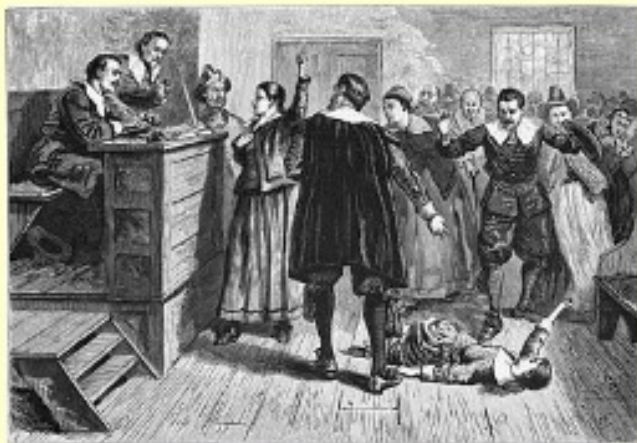






## Period name: *Puritanism*

- 1600-1800
- First “American” colonies established
- Salem Witch Trials





## Period Characteristics:

- Wrote mostly diaries and histories, which expressed the connections between God and their everyday lives.
- Sought to “purify” the Church of England
- Saw religion as a personal, inner experience.







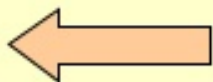
- Believed in original sin and “elect” who would be saved.
- Used a plain style of writing





## **Famous Works and Writers:**

- William Bradford (“Of Plymouth Plantation”)
- Anne Bradstreet (poetry)
- Jonathan Edwards (“Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God”)
- Edward Taylor (“Huswifery”)





## Period name: *Rationalism*

- 1750-1800
- Revolutionary War
- The Constitution, The Bill of Rights, and The Declaration of Independence were created





## Period Characteristics:

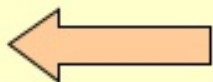
- Otherwise called: *“The Age of Reason”*  
*“The Enlightenment”*
- Mostly comprised of philosophers, scientists, writing speeches and pamphlets.
- Human beings can arrive at truth (God’s rules) by using **deductive reasoning**.





## **Famous Works and Writers:**

- Benjamin Franklin (Autobiography)
- Patrick Henry (“Speech to the Virginia Convention”)
- Thomas Paine (“The Crisis”)
- Phyllis Wheatley (poetry)

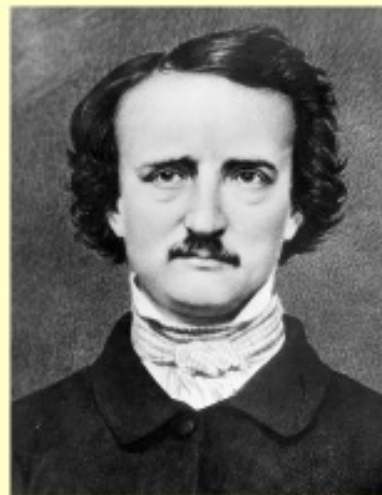






## Period name: *Romanticism*

- 1800-1860
- Industrialization
- War of 1812
- California Gold Rush





## Period Characteristics:

- Valued feeling, intuition, idealism, and inductive reasoning.
- Placed faith in inner experience and the power of the imagination.
- Shunned the artificiality of civilization and seek unspoiled nature as a path to spirituality.





- - Championed **individual freedom** and the worth of the individual.
- - Saw **poetry** as the highest expression of the imagination.
- - **Dark Romantics**: Used dark and supernatural themes/settings (Gothic style)





## **Famous Works and Writers:**

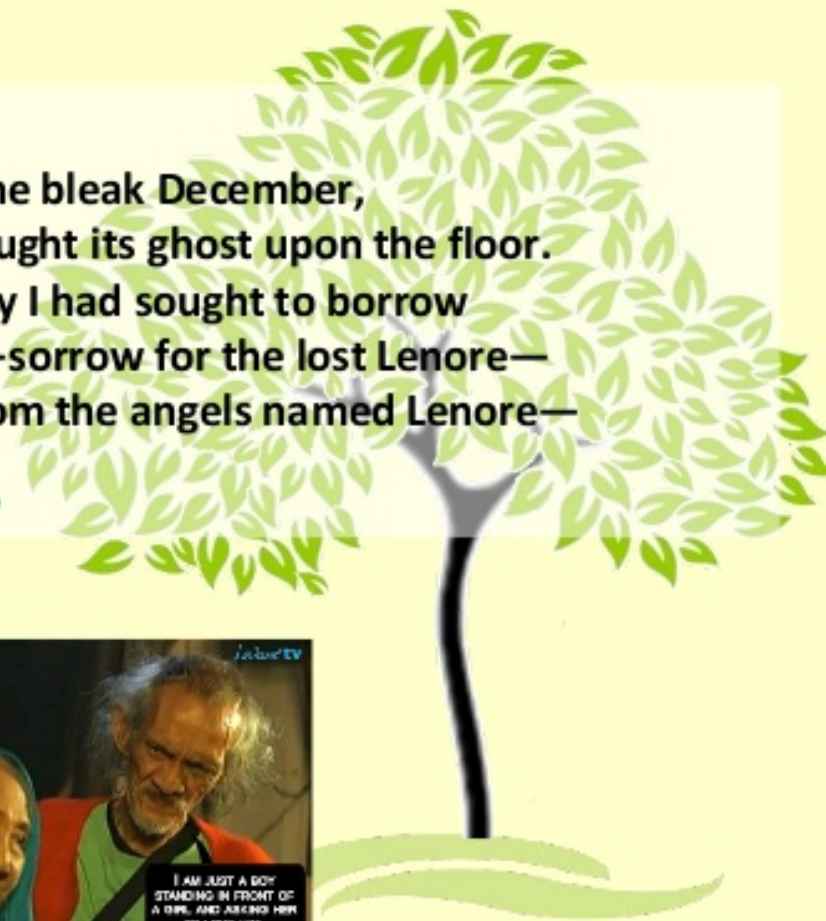
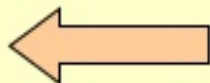
- Washington Irving (“Rip Van Winkle”)
- Emily Dickinson (poetry)
- Walt Whitman (Leaves of Grass)
- Edgar Allan Poe (“The Raven”)
- Nathaniel Hawthorne (The Scarlet Letter)





Edgar Allan Poe, "The Raven" (1845)

Ah, distinctly I remember it was in the bleak December,  
And each separate dying ember wrought its ghost upon the floor.  
Eagerly I wished the morrow;—vainly I had sought to borrow  
From my books surcease of sorrow—sorrow for the lost Lenore—  
For the rare and radiant maiden whom the angels named Lenore—  
Nameless here **for evermore.**



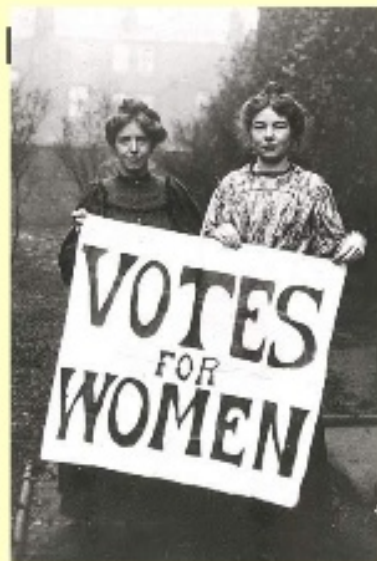




## Period name: *Transcendentalism*

- 1840-1860
- Abolitionist, Utopian, and Women's Suffrage Movement

**ANTI-SLAVERY!**  
"NO UNION WITH SLAVEHOLDERS."  
**A. T. FOSS**  
AND  
**J. A. HOWLAND,**  
Agents respectively of the Mass. and American  
**ANTI-SLAVERY SOCIETIES,**  
Will speak at  
**COME AND HEAR!**





## Period Characteristics:

- Otherwise called “The American Renaissance”
- Everything in the world, Including human beings, is a reflection of the Divine Soul
- People can use their intuition to behold God’s spirit revealed in nature or in their own souls.





- **Self-reliance** and **individualism** must outweigh external authority and blind conformity to tradition



#### STEPS TO SELF-RELIANCE

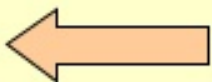
1. Assume responsibility
2. Be informed
3. Know where you're going
4. Make your own decisions





## **Famous Works and Writers:**

- Ralph Waldo Emerson (Nature, “Self-Reliance”)
- Henry David Thoreau (Walden, Life in the Woods)
- Louisa May Alcott (Little Women)



## Period name: *Realism*

- 1850-1900
- Civil War
- Reconstruction







## Period Characteristics:

- Feelings of disillusionment
- **Common subjects:** slums of rapidly growing cities, factories replacing farmlands, poor factory workers, corrupt politicians





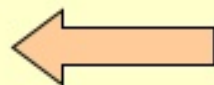
- Represented the manner and environment of everyday life and ordinary people as realistically as possible (regionalism)
- Sought to explain behavior (psychologically/socially).





## Famous Works and Writers:

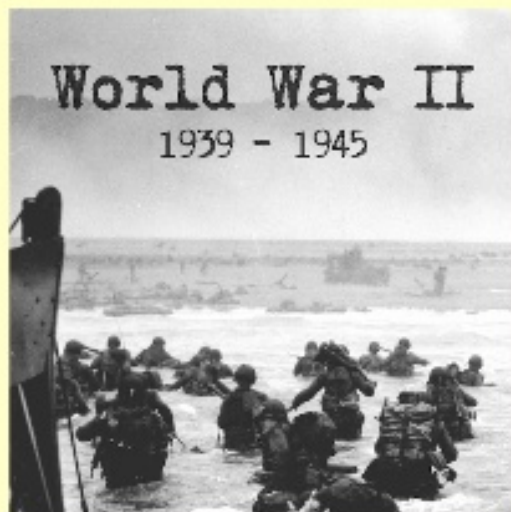
- Mark Twain (Huckleberry Finn)
- Jack London (Call of the Wild, "To Build a Fire,")
- Stephen Crane ("The Open Boat")
- Ambrose Bierce ("An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge")
- Kate Chopin ("Story of an Hour," The Awakening)





## Period name: *Modernism*

- 1900-1950
- World War I
- The Great Depression
- World War II





## Period Characteristics:

- Sense of disillusionment and loss of faith in the “**American Dream**”: the independence, self-reliant, individual will triumph.
- Emphasis on bold experimentation in style and form over the traditional.





- Interest in the inner workings of the **human mind** (ex. Stream of consciousness).





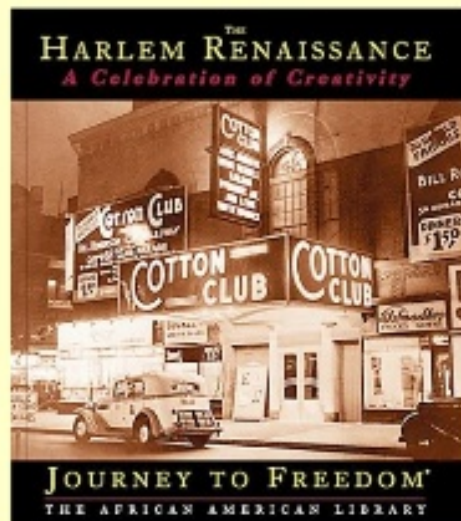
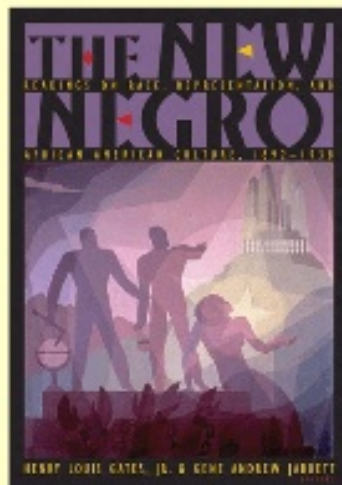
## Famous Works and Writers:

- Lorraine Hansberry (A Raisin in the Sun) - F. Scott Fitzgerald (The Great Gatsby)
  - William Faulkner (“A Rose for Emily”)
  - Eudora Welty (“A Worn Path”)
  - Robert Frost (poetry)
  - T.S. Eliot (The Waste Land, “Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock”)
  - John Steinbeck (Of Mice and Men →  
Grapes of Wrath)
- 



# Period name: *Harlem Renaissance*

- 1920-1940
- “The New Negro Movement”
- Prohibition





## Period Characteristics:

- Otherwise called “The Jazz Age” “The Roaring 20s”
- Black cultural movement in Harlem, New York
- Some poetry rhythms based on spirituals, and jazz, lyrics on the blues, and diction from the street talk of the ghettos

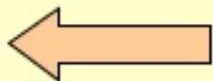






## Famous Works and Writers:

- James Weldon Johnson
- Claude McKay, Countee Cullen
- Langston Hughes (poetry)
- Zora Neale Hurston







## Period name: *Contemporary*

- 1950-present
- Korean War
- Vietnam War





## Period Characteristics:

- Otherwise called “Postmodernism”
  -
- Influenced by studies of media, language, and information technology.
  -
- Sense that little is unique; culture endlessly duplicates and copies itself.





- New literary forms and techniques: works composed of only dialogue or combining fiction and nonfiction, experimenting with physical appearance of their work



## Famous Works and Writers:

- Alice Walker
- Wallace Stevens
- E. E. Cummings
- Maya Angelou
- Anne Sexton
- James Baldwin
- Richard Wright
- Sandra Cisneros
- Amy Tan

