



**Switched-On**  
SCHOOLHOUSE

# Course Catalog

## American Literature

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COURSE OVERVIEW

American Literature is a five-unit elective that engages high school students in a literary conversation with some of the most colorful and influential minds in American history. Their words will give students a greater understanding of themselves, their culture, and the ideas of others. The course teaches students the various movements in American literature, starting with the roots of American literature in writings from the Puritans. The course concludes with works by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and other black writers who were part of the struggle for racial freedom during the civil rights era.

Through this course, students will do the following:

- Recognize the religious beliefs of selected founding fathers, as evidenced in their writings.
- Identify the birth of a distinctively American literature.
- Recognize the impact of slavery on individuals and society.
- Understand and identify the influence of modernism upon religion and the arts.
- Recognize the dominant themes and techniques used in literature at the end of the twentieth century.

UNIT 1: EARLY AMERICAN LITERATURE 1600-1800			
Assignment Titles			
AMERICAN LITERATURE	1.	Course Overview	14. Jonathan Edwards
	2.	Introduction: The Puritans	15. Benjamin Franklin
	3.	John Smith	16. Essay: Authors' Views of Mankind
	4.	William Bradford	17. Thomas Paine
	5.	John Winthrop	18. Thomas Jefferson
	6.	Quiz 1: The Puritans	19. Michel-Guillaume Jean de Crevecoeur
	7.	The Colonists: Mary Rowlandson	20. Essay: Biblical Imagery and References*
	8.	Anne Bradstreet	21. Quiz 3: Days of Change and Revolution
	9.	Essay: Comparing Authors' Views	22. Special Project*
	10.	Edward Taylor	23. Test: Early American Literature
	11.	Samuel Sewall	24. Alternate Test: Early American Literature*
	12.	Quiz 2: The Colonists	25. Reference
	13.	Days of Change and Revolution 1700-1800	

UNIT 2: THE ROMANTIC PERIOD 1800-1855			
Assignment Titles			
AMERICAN LITERATURE	1.	A New Nation 1800-1840: Introduction	13. Quiz 2: The Fireside Poets and Transcendentalists
	2.	Washington Irving	14. The Voices of Despair: Edgar Allen Poe
	3.	James Fenimore Cooper	15. The Voices of Despair: Nathaniel Hawthorne
	4.	William Cullen Bryant	16. The Voices of Despair: Herman Melville
	5.	Quiz 1: A New Nation	17. The Voices of Despair: Emily Dickinson
	6.	American Naissance 1840-1855: Introduction	18. Project: Responding to Literature
	7.	The Fireside Poets: Henry Wadsworth Longfellow	19. Quiz 3: The Voices of Despair
	8.	The Fireside Poets: John Greenleaf Whittier	20. Special Project*
	9.	The Fireside Poets: Oliver Wendell Holmes	21. Test: The Romantic Period
	10.	The Transcendentalists: Ralph Waldo Emerson	22. Alternate Test: The Romantic Period*
	11.	The Transcendentalists: Henry David Thoreau	23. Reference
	12.	The Transcendentalists: Walt Whitman	

UNIT 3: WAR AND RECONCILIATION 1855-1915		
AMERICAN LITERATURE	<b>Assignment Titles</b>	
	1. Secession and Loyalty 1855-1865: Introduction	13. Naturalists, Regionalists and Realists: Stephen Crane
	2. Frederick Douglass	14. Kate Chopin
	3. Harriet Beecher Stowe	15. Paul Laurence Dunbar
	4. Spirituals	16. Jack London
	5. Robert E. Lee	17. Essay: Analysis and Response
	6. Abraham Lincoln	18. Quiz 3: Naturalists, Regionalists, and Realists
	7. Quiz 1: Secession and Loyalty 1855 - 1865	19. Special Project*
	8. Realism and Naturalism 1865-1915: Introduction	20. Test: War and Reconciliation
	9. Samuel Langhorne Clemens (Mark Twain)	21. Alternate Test: War and Reconciliation*
	10. William Dean Howells	22. Reference
	11. Henry James	
	12. Quiz 2: Realism and Naturalism 1865 - 1915	

UNIT 4: THE MODERN AGE 1915-1946		
AMERICAN LITERATURE	<b>Assignment Titles</b>	
	1. The Modern Age	12. Quiz 2: Modern Poetry
	2. Modern Prose: Ernest Hemingway	13. Other Modern Age Literature: Harlem Renaissance, Langston Hughes
	3. F. Scott Fitzgerald	14. Drama: Thornton Wilder
	4. Quiz 1: Modern Prose	15. Religious Works: J. Gresham Machen
	5. Modern Poetry: Ezra Pound	16. Quiz 3: Other Literature
	6. Carl Sandburg	17. Special Project*
	7. E. E. Cummings	18. Test: The Modern Age
	8. Wallace Stevens	19. Alternate Test: The Modern Age*
	9. Robert Frost	20. Reference
	10. W. H. Auden	
11. Project: Poetry Models		

UNIT 5: FROM MODERN TO POSTMODERN 1946-PRESENT		
AMERICAN LITERATURE	<b>Assignment Titles</b>	
	1. The Birth of Postmodernism: Introduction	11. Social Issues: Martin Luther King, Jr.
	2. Flannery O'Connor (1)	12. Essay: Dr. King's Literary Allusions
	3. Flannery O'Connor (2)	13. Ralph Ellison
	4. Flannery O'Connor (3)	14. Gwendolyn Brooks
	5. Theodore Roethke	15. Project: Responding to Postmodernism
	6. Quiz 1: The Birth of Postmodernism	16. Quiz 3: Social Issues
	7. More Contemporary Writers: Eudora Welty	17. Special Project*
	8. John Updike	18. Test: From Modern to Postmodern
	9. Robert Trail Spence Lowell, Jr.	19. Alternate Test: From Modern to Postmodern*
10. Quiz 2: More Contemporary Writers	20. Reference	

(\*) Indicates alternate assignment