

新经典
ENGLISH MAJOR

高等学校英语专业系列教材

新编美国文学教程

AMERICAN LITERATURE

赵文书
主编

A BRIEF INTRODUCTION AND ANTHOLOGY



外语教学与研究出版社
FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHING AND RESEARCH PRESS

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主编：赵文书

编者：康文凯 张 瑛 何 宁

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前言

《新编美国文学教程》供高等院校英语专业本科阶段美国文学课程教学使用，也可供同等程度的学习者参考。

本书以作品选读为主，辅以简明的文学史概述，并扼要介绍文学论文写作的基本类型和方法。本书力图通过教学内容的安排和练习形式的设置，引导学习者在广泛深入阅读的基础上，注重思辨和表达；通过学习美国文学，了解美国的社会、历史和文化；通过阅读、讨论和写作，锻炼英语基本功，综合提高语言能力、思辨能力和文化素质。

按照美国文学的历史分期，本书将文学作品选读分为四个部分，各部分首先概述该历史阶段的美国文学，勾勒出特定历史文化背景下的美国文学的发展过程和特点，然后分单元介绍主要作家和作品。

各单元根据以下原则精选作家和作品：1. 该作家在美国文学发展过程中的地位和作用；2. 选读作品在美国文学史上及该作家作品中的代表性；3. 选读作品能够反映特定阶段的美国历史与文化；4. 入选的作家作品在国内有较多译介和研究，便于学习者进行课程学习和进一步研究；5. 适当缩减早期的作家作品，增加现当代作家作品的分量，以此增强时代感，拉近选读内容与学习者的距离，提高学习者的阅读兴趣。

全书分30个单元，逐一介绍40位作家及其作品，其中同一时期的诗人集中列在一个单元，便于安排教学。本书可供开设4个学分的美国文学课程使用；开设2个学分的美国文学课程可选用其中的部分单元，其他单元可作为课外阅读。每个单元设置以下学习内容：

1. 作家及其作品简介 扼要介绍作家生平，交代作品的历史文化背景，为短篇作品提供导读，为长篇作品的节选提供故事梗概。

2. 作品选读 优先选用内容相对完整的短篇作品，便于分析讨论；节选长篇作品中具有典型意义的章节，引导学习者阅读完整的作品。

3. 注释 采用脚注的形式，用中文注释具有特殊文化历史意义的专有名词以及诗歌和早期文本中的特殊语言现象，不注释普通生词。

4. 讨论 围绕选读作品设计讨论问题和写作话题，引导学习者在理解作品内容的基础上，把握作品的文学特征并思考其文化历史意义。



学习文学的最终目标是能够在充分理解的基础上，结合文本内容和文学要素，分析解读文学作品的意义，并清晰地将其表达出来。鉴于国内文学教材中一般只有写作思考题，而没有提供文学评论写作指导，本书特设一个文学论文写作部分，一方面，扼要介绍分析和评价文学作品的三种基本写作类型和写作方法，即文本细读（explication）、文学分析（literary analysis）和对比研究（comparison-contrast），另一方面，提供范文和进一步练习文学论文写作方法的话题，帮助学习者完成课程作业，指导其写出千词左右的课程论文。

文学论文写作部分集中置于本书的末尾。为达到综合提高学习者的语言能力和思辨能力的目的，建议教师在教学过程中，结合单元写作话题，穿插讲解三种类型的文学论文写作方法；在课堂中抽出一定的时间，对学习者的习作进行讲评；鼓励学习者通过网络资源，进一步学习文学论文的写作方法，并在课后写作中反复练习。

最后，本书还针对每位作家推荐了相关阅读书目，包括作家本人的代表作和研究该作家的著作，此外还提供了与该作家和作品相关的网络资源和简要说明，以鼓励学习者进一步探索和自主学习。此类补充资料可登录高等英语教学网（<http://www.heep.cn>）查阅和下载。

在本书的编写工作中，康文凯负责第1、6、12、13、18、19、23、24、25、28单元，张瑛负责第2、4、5、7、9、11、14、15、21、22单元，何宁负责第10、16、26、29单元，赵文书负责第3、8、17、20、27、30单元、文学史概述、文学论文写作、文学术语以及全书统稿。

本书的编写得到了全国美国文学研究会前会长刘海平教授和现任会长朱刚教授的指导，王守仁教授、张子清教授以及杨金才教授等也给予支持和鼓励，南京大学英语系的外教马楠博士（Dr. Sylvia Ma）审读了部分书稿并提出宝贵的修改意见，外语教学与研究出版社的领导和编辑一直给予关心和帮助，在此一并致谢。

敬请使用本教材的老师和同学提出宝贵意见和建议，帮助我们进一步完善教材内容。

赵文书

2013年1月于南京大学

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The Origin and Development of
American Literature
(Beginnings to 1860)



American literature has diverse origins, beginning with myths, legends, tales, and lyrics orally transmitted among American Indians, the native inhabitants of the land. Written records about “America” started with the European exploration and colonization of the New World, first in Christopher Columbus’ journal (printed in 1493), and then in the diaries, letters, travel journals, ships’ logs, and reports written in various European languages by many other explorers and colonists that followed.

While the Spanish, Portuguese, and French came before the English, it was English that eventually became the primary language of American literature and culture because the English settlers ultimately dominated the North American colonies.

The English colonies stretched along the east coast of what is now the United States of America. The English colonization started in the South, with its first permanent colony, Jamestown, established in 1607 in Virginia. The experience of the Jamestown colonists was recorded by Captain John Smith (1580–1631) in his *The General History of Virginia* (1624) and other writings. In terms of cultural influence, however, the more significant writings of colonial times were done in northern colonies of New England.

The early settlers of the New England colonies were Protestants. In 1534, England broke away from the Roman Catholic Church and became a protestant country. Some English people felt that the break was not complete and wanted to “purify” the English Church of Catholic features such as elaborate hierarchies and rituals, and hence they were called Puritans. The Puritans wanted to return to more primitive principles of simplicity, religious earnestness, and personal self-control. In order to worship God in their own way and to escape persecution by English authorities, they came to the New World. They took their colonization of the New World as a divine mission, believing that it was by the will of God that they establish a religious society or “New Eden” in the “wilderness.”

Puritanism, the beliefs of Puritans, had a strong influence on the intellectual quality of New England life, which later influenced other parts of the country. Puritanism was a way of life that put emphasis on the importance of moral struggle and hard work to win God’s approval. To the Puritans, good writing was that which gave them an awareness of the importance of worshipping God and of the spiritual dangers in everyday life. Because of the Puritan influence and the hardship of life, literature, as we know it today, was underdeveloped in colonial America.

During the colonial period (1620–1763), early American writings were utilitarian and religious in nature, existing in the form of biographies, histories, sermons, and treatises that recorded the life and religious experience of the early settlers. Imaginative literature, such as fiction and drama, was not welcomed by the Puritans. The only imaginative literature acceptable to the Puritans was poetry, if it was done to serve religious devotion. In fact, the first book in English to be published in the New World was the *Bay Psalm Book* (1640)—new translations of the Book of Psalms from the Bible into English verse.

Understandably, much of the poetry of the colonial period was didactic and religious, but there were still some memorable poems that transcended the period. Anne Bradstreet (c. 1612–1672), whose husband was governor of the Massachusetts Bay Colony, had her *The Tenth Muse Lately Sprung Up in America* (1650) published in England. It was the first published book of poems by an American and also the first American book published by a woman. In her poems, she expressed her feelings about religion and family life, which can still strike a chord in the heart of a modern reader.

Edward Taylor (c. 1642–1729), an English-born minister, wrote many poems that were not discovered and published until 1939. His poetry, less touched by gloom than the typical Puritan verse, showed his delight in Christian belief and experience and perhaps offered the finest examples of 17th-century poetry in North America.

In the 18th century, life in the North American colonies increasingly turned from the religious toward the worldly because of the influence of Enlightenment, a European intellectual movement of the 17th and 18th centuries that celebrated reason, the capacity by which humans understand the universe and improve their own conditions. The American Enlightenment put emphasis on rationality rather than tradition, science instead of religious dogma, and representative government in place of monarchy. In this milieu, the power of Puritanism began to wane. To counter this worldly turn, the Puritans launched the Great Awakening, a religious revival movement in the 1730s led by Jonathan Edwards (1703–1758), but they failed to keep the authority of Puritanism. Their influence on American culture, however, cannot be underestimated and remains to this day.

Benjamin Franklin, a contemporary of Jonathan Edwards, was a representative figure in American Enlightenment. Different from the “Last Puritan,” as Edwards was sometimes called, Franklin was a humanitarian who had faith in human progress. He advocated that common sense was a good guide in everyday life, which



was made clear in the popular *Poor Richard's Almanac* that he edited and published between 1732 and 1758. He believed that an individual was able to improve himself and his community through industry and thrift, an idea exemplified by his own life story and partly recorded in his *Autobiography*.

The American Revolution (1775–1783) marked a turn in American history, making the English colonies in North America an independent country. Victory was won through the power of the gun but also through the power of the pen. Political writings, such as Thomas Paine's (1737–1809) pamphlet *Common Sense* (1776) as well as his other writings, encouraged the colonists to declare their independence and spurred them to fight on in their revolutionary cause. The Declaration of Independence, drafted by Thomas Jefferson (1743–1826), eloquently announced the birth of a new nation on the democratic principles “that all men are created equal, and that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness.” After independence, the Federalist Papers, written by Alexander Hamilton (1757–1804) and others, did much in support of the newly proposed Constitution of the United States.

Inspired by their political independence, Americans aspired to literary independence as well. The poet Philip Freneau (1752–1832) was one of the first writers to plead for a native literature. He wrote political poetry in support of the revolutionary cause and later turned to various aspects peculiar to the American scene. In 1783, Noah Webster declared that “America must be as independent in literature as she is in politics, as famous for arts as for arms,” and he made his contribution toward this end by compiling both *The American Spelling Book* (1783) and *American Dictionary of the English Language* (1828). A few years after independence, Americans saw the publication of their first novel, *The Power of Sympathy* (1789) by William Hill Brown (1765–1793).

It took the United States of America quite some time to develop a distinctive national literature. For the first 50 years or so after the founding of the nation, American writers still depended on their English predecessors and peers for literary models. Washington Irving, for example, wrote his essays in the style of Addison and Steele; James Fenimore Cooper wrote novels like those of Scott; and William Cullen Bryant was known as the American Wordsworth.

Though still perceptibly English in form and style, American writings of this period began to exhibit a distinct American content, particularly in character and setting. As the first American writer that earned the respect of British critics,

Washington Irving (1783–1859) focused on New York and its vicinity. His best known stories were “The Legend of Sleepy Hollow” and “Rip Van Winkle,” both published in *The Sketch Book* (1819–1820). Adapted from a German source, these stories became American legends with localized settings and characters, instilling a sense of history that was much needed by the new nation.

James Fenimore Cooper (1789–1851) was well known not only in America and England but on the continent of Europe as well. With more than 30 novels and many other works, Cooper was best known as the writer of the *Leatherstocking Tales*, a series of five novels about American frontier life featuring a distinctively American hero, the resourceful and courageous woodsman Natty Bumppo.

In those early days of the nation, American poetry found its best expression in the poems of William Cullen Bryant (1794–1878), who sang of the beauty of New England sceneries. Mixing natural details with philosophical musings, his “To a Waterfowl” (1818) was considered the best short poem of the day in the English language by the English poet and critic Matthew Arnold.

Noteworthy at this historical juncture was the emergence of women and minority writers, among whom the most notable was the first African American poet Phillis Wheatley (c. 1753–1784), a slave girl brought from Africa to Boston, who wrote about religious themes in her poems.

In the middle of the 19th century, American literature came of age. From the 1830s until the end of the American Civil War, a period that was called “the American Renaissance,” there came a sudden outburst of creative energy with which a constellation of literary stars produced their best works that were destined to become masterpieces in American literature. This was in part influenced by the Romantic Movement, which originated in Europe and spread to America in the 1820s. The Romantic influence, which could be felt in the works of early Romanticists such as Irving, Cooper, and Bryant, would help bring American literature to its maturity.

A distinctive American strand of Romanticism was called Transcendentalism, which shared the Romantic assumption of the importance of intuitive feeling over reason, the exaltation of the individual over society, and a strong fascination with nature. The most representative Transcendentalist was Ralph Waldo Emerson, who, together with others, formed the Transcendental Club. In his *Nature* (1836) and other essays, he propounded that everything in nature had its counterpart in the mind and that each object was a miniature version of the universe; hence, nature, observed by



an intuitive imagination of an individual, offered endless clues to spiritual truths. This belief had profound cultural and literary implications. Intuition as the medium between nature and self-knowledge translated into an emphasis of individualism in American culture and the importance of symbolic representation in American literature.

A close associate of Emerson, Henry David Thoreau practiced what Emerson had preached. His masterpiece, *Walden* (1854), was the result of his two-year living and pondering alone in a cabin he built in the woods by Walden Pond. His apparent zeal for living a simple and independent life close to nature still speaks to the hearts of readers today. Thoreau's spirit of independence extended to his moral independence from social and political constraints. His idea of passive resistance to injustice, as elaborated in his essay "Civil Disobedience," was an inspiration for Mahatma Gandhi's Indian independence movement and Martin Luther King's struggle for African American civil rights in the 20th century.

During the Romantic period, New England was the center of literary activities. Popular in the day was the poetry of New England "Brahmins"—taken from the Indian term for the educated upper-class—including Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, Oliver Wendell Holmes (1809–1894), and James Russell Lowell (1819–1891). Brought up in prominent families and well versed in European culture, they introduced the European tradition in an attempt to educate and elevate the American populace. Following conventional social, religious, and literary standards, they represented the genteel tradition against which generations of American writers were to battle. Among them, the most popular poet was Longfellow, many of whose lyric poems continue to give pleasure to readers today.

The radically innovative American poet, however, was Walt Whitman, whom the Brahmins refused to meet socially. His *Leaves of Grass*, which he first published in 1855 and subsequently spent his lifetime expanding and refining, was a monument in the history of American literature. His new style of free verse and his fresh voice in celebration of the American experience and in praise of the American spirit marked the birth of a truly American poetry, giving inspiration to generations of poets and readers in America and throughout the world, making him the most influential poet in American literature.

Equally innovative but less known at the time was Emily Dickinson, a secluded poet who seldom left her New England home and lived in isolation from the outside world most of the time. Written in an idiosyncratic style using compressed language

and unusual imageries, her poetry explores many themes such as nature, death, time, and religion, exhibiting literary sensitivities more from the 20th century than her own time. Although she was not recognized as a poet in her lifetime, her poetry was to be rediscovered and reclaimed in the 1950s as some of the finest American poetry of the 19th century.

The creative energy of the American Renaissance also found its strong expression in fiction writing. The foremost American novelists of this era were Nathaniel Hawthorne and Herman Melville. Nathaniel Hawthorne, born to a prominent Puritan family in Salem, Massachusetts, steeped himself in the history of colonial New England. From his *The Scarlet Letter* (1850) to many of his short stories, Hawthorne set his fictional works in Puritan New England to explore intricate moral problems whose solutions were often ambiguous. His fiction, seemingly simple, is rich and subtle. Through his masterly use of allegory and symbolism, Hawthorne is able to reveal truth that is psychological and universal rather than religious or theological, thereby avoiding the didacticism found in most works dealing with moral concerns.

Herman Melville was a neighbor and friend of Hawthorne. Many of his works were related to his experience as a sailor. His most important novel, *Moby-Dick* (1851), tells the story of Captain Ahab in obsessive pursuit of a white whale that finally kills him. In this seemingly realistic adventure novel, Melville takes whaling as a grand metaphor, weaving his complex meditations on the human condition in rich symbolism. The importance of his writings, however, was not fully recognized until the 1920s when modernist critics rediscovered Melville and established him among the greatest American writers.

In the 19th century, the major writer in the South was Edgar Allan Poe. Like other Romantic writers, Poe valued intuition and imagination. Unlike his New England contemporaries whose works often carried moral overtones, he was only interested in beauty, which made him the precursor of the “art for art’s sake” movement. His poetry and short stories, often about timeless places and people, have a haunting and beautiful quality. His use of symbolism in search of the dark corners of human psyche had a strong influence on the French Symbolists, and his popularity endured in the 20th century.

In the United States of America, which was founded on the principles of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, slavery had been a contentious issue. To their credit, the literary quarters of American society would exert an important influence



on the abolition of slavery. John Greenleaf Whittier (1807–1892), a popular New England poet of the time, used his poetry in support of the abolitionist course. Frederick Douglass, a former slave, offered witness to the evils of slavery in his *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass* (1845). But by far the most influential abolitionist writer was Harriet Beecher Stowe (1811–1896) who dramatized the plight of the black slaves in her *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (1852). This anti-slavery novel boosted the abolitionist sentiments leading up to the American Civil War (1861–1865) so much so that, as a legend has it, Abraham Lincoln addressed Mrs. Stowe as “the little lady who wrote the book that started this great war.”

■ Recommended Readings

1. 张冲：《新编美国文学史》（第一卷）。上海：上海外语教育出版社，2000年。
2. 童明：《美国文学史》。北京：外语教学与研究出版社，2008年。第3–140页。